

Agenda Item	13.
Report No	EDU/14/24

The Highland Council

Committee: Education

Date: 30 May 2024

Report Title: Community Learning and Development Year 2 Report October 2022 to September 2023

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The Highland Council has the statutory responsibility for Community Learning. This report provides Members with a summary of the progress made by the Highland CLD Partnership in year two of the Highland Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note the progress, including key achievements, made in year two of the Highland Community Learning and Development Plan;
- ii. Note the priorities and focus for year three of the Highland Community Learning and Development Plan, and;
- iii. Note that the annual inspection visit from His Majesty Inspectors of Education for CLD has been advised to Highland Council for Monday 3rd to Wednesday 5th June.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource - The requirements for the CLD Plan are delivered within the existing resources of the Community Planning Partnership.

3.2 Legal - There is a legal duty on the Highland Council (Education Department) to develop a three-year CLD plan.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) - The focus for CLD work is to reduce disadvantage and inequality.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - There are no climate change/carbon clever and risk implications arising from this report.

3.5 Risk - There are no new risk implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

3.6 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)
- There are no new implications arising from this report.

3.7 Gaelic - The Safeguarding and CLD team is connected with the Gaelic CLD officers to ensure Gaelic requirements are met.

4. Overview

4.1 **Legislation and Expectations** The Highland Council (Education Authority) has a statutory duty, as set-out in [The Requirements for Community Learning and Development \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013 \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/legislation-and-policy/legislation/the-requirements-for-community-learning-and-development-scotland-regulations-2013), to publish a Community Learning and Development (CLD) plan every three years describing how the Council will co-ordinate and secure adequate and efficient CLD provision with other sector partners. This report presents the progress made in year two of the 3-year plan and makes reference to the progress made on the rollout of Highland Cares and My Future My Success.

4.2 **CLD work in Scotland is guided by the [Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategic-guidance-for-community-planning-partnerships-community-learning-and-development-2012/html)** document and underpinned in legislation through [The Requirements for Community Learning and Development \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013 \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/legislation-and-policy/legislation/the-requirements-for-community-learning-and-development-scotland-regulations-2013); and supports the achievement of the following national policy goals:

- to ensure communities across Scotland – particularly those which are disadvantaged – have access to the CLD support they need;
- to strengthen coordination between the full range of CLD providers and respond appropriately to the expectations set by the CLD Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development 2012 (Scottish Government);
- to reinforce the role of communities and learners in assessment, planning and evaluation processes, enabling them to shape local CLD provision; and
- to articulate the important role and contribution of CLD and make it more visible.

4.3 The Scottish Government published guidance for the development of the 2021-2024 CLD plans. This emphasised the expectation that plans should be developed and reported through Community Planning Partnerships and that the first year of the new plans should be developmental, reflecting the learning from the Covid-19 pandemic and the second year should focus on recovery measures. In addition, The Scottish Government has also identified 5 key themes that should be addressed through CLD Planning:

1. Involvement
2. Shared CLD priorities
3. Planning
4. Governance monitoring
5. Workforce development

5. Development of the Highland CLD Plan

5.1 In October 2020 the then CLD Delivery Group undertook a review of all available Community Partnership-led locality plans and Covid response evaluations and from this summarised the following themes:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Voice, Inclusion and Participation
- Digital Inclusion
- Employment, Volunteering and Training
- Community Development and Resilience

5.2 Following engagement with stakeholders and an analysis of a range of data, the priorities for year 2 were co-created. This work runs alongside the rollout of Highland Cares and MFMS. The data considered was as follows:

- Scottish index of multiple deprivation (SIMD)
- Socio Economic Performance (SEP) Index
- NHS Health Profiles
- Highland Youth Work Strategy Young People’s Survey 2019
- HOIP Health and Wellbeing Young People’s Mental Health Consultation 2020
- THC Community Conversations 2020
- HTSI exploring the impact of the pandemic on third sector staff and service users in Highland 2020

5.3 The Highland CLD Plan does not seek to outline all proposed CLD activity to be undertaken in Highland. The following priorities, arrived at with partners, are the focus of collaboration.

Theme	CLD Priority
Mental Health & Wellbeing	The CLD community in Highland will prioritise working together to improve mental health and wellbeing experienced by people in our communities. This work will be targeted towards those at greater risk of poorer outcomes.
Voice, Inclusion & Participation	CLD will make it a priority to listen to those individuals and groups who want to but have little or no connection with decision makers and service budget holders; and support them to influence the positive changes that are required to improve the lives of under-represented and seldom heard people.
Digital Inclusion	CLD partners will support digital inclusion. This priority will focus on increasing skills, confidence, and access.
Employment, Volunteering & Training	CLD in Highland will provide visible, easy to access opportunities which support routes into Employment, volunteering, and training for those who need it most.
Community Development & Resilience	CLD in Highland will prioritise targeted support to the development of capacity in key areas and of groups to increase their resilience for the future. This priority will build on the experiences and outcomes of Highland communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Appendix 1 provides a summary of the progress made against the priorities in the second year of the plan.

5.4 **How the plan is delivered:** The ambitions set out in the plan are delivered through the 9 Community Planning Partnership CLD delivery partners. The Highland CLD network provides an opportunity for partners to come together to plan, deliver and evaluate CLD provision using the strategic priorities as a framework.

5.5 **Key Achievements in Year Two for the CLD Plan**

5.5.1 **CLD contribution to mitigate the effects of the Cost-of-Living Crisis**

The partnership worked together across the 9 Community Planning Partnerships to support communities with their response to the cost of living Crisis through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; the Children and Young People's Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund rolled out by Highland Cares; and the Adult Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund rolled out by the Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI).

Examples of cost-of-living crisis case studies in **Appendix 1** include:

- **Here for Caithness** (formerly Caithness Cares)
- **Caithness Sway** ([8th September 2023 \(cloud.microsoft\)](#)) a weekly ebulletin factsheet that signposts to cost-of-living support, Citizens Advice Gambling Support Service and Mental Health Awareness Training Courses.
- **Sinclair's Bay Trust Cost-of-living Community Resilience Project** – warm space with light lunch to reduce isolation and loneliness, and to mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living for residents living in Sinclair Bay, Wick.

5.5.2 **Children and Young People's Mental Health**

The CLD community in Highland prioritises working together to improve the levels of mental health and wellbeing experienced by children and young people in our communities. This work is targeted towards those at greater risk of poorer outcomes. Case studies included in in appendix 1 include:

- [Growing2gether](#) – A youth social action mentoring programme for young people aged 14-16 to support them into positive destinations through learning and personal development within nursery schools (featured in CLD spotlight on Mental Health)
- [Young Grant Givers](#) – Youth Highland's participatory budgeting process for young people to tackle anti-social behaviour (drugs/alcohol/criminal behaviour), gender inequalities and support partnership working.
- [Healthy Minds](#) is a partnership with Inspiring Young Voices, Highland Council, the Youth Convener, Highlife Highland, Voluntary Youth Network and CALA to enable children and young people to be in dialogue with decision makers.
- Highland CHAMPS - participation and advocacy group for care experienced children and young people joined the Festival of Care and Connection *#TendingTheLight in the North* and HCPC conference *#HelpingHandHighland*.

5.5.3 **Support and Learning for Refugees**

The partnership worked together across agencies to support the development of family learning and adult learning provision for refugees and asylum seekers. Case studies in Appendix 1 include:

- The Highland Integration Network – support for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine.

- Reducing isolation and issues around integration - Syrian refugees share learning around their cultural heritage.
- Inspiring Young Voices – A voice for young refugees and asylum seekers.
- HLH ESOL For Driving Course – driving theory and ESOL classes for refugees.
- Ukrainian Language Learning Platform [ODILO](#) with over 2,000 e-books in libraries
- Workers Educational Association (WEA) - Family learning for Ukrainian refugees
- HLH Swimming Lessons for Syrian ladies
- Education Aid in Brora created hundreds of handmade chalk boards from recycled materials with colouring pencils for children in Eastern Europe and Ukraine, along with sewing kits and reuseable sanitary towels to support teenage girls experiencing period poverty.

5.5.4 Delivering the Multiply Programme (UK Shared Prosperity Fund)

In 2022/23, the UKPF Challenge Fund has seen 12 organisations provide a range of innovative numeracy training and learning opportunities across Highland. The total allocation of £460,115 was shared among 12 partners to deliver the programme up to December 2023. The distinctive courses have improved access to employability, pre-employability support, specialist support and targeted employment support:

- Courses for parents wanting to increase numeracy skills.
- Courses for prisoners, those recently released or on temporary licence.
- Courses aimed at encouraging people to upskill to access jobs/careers.
- Innovative programmes delivered with employers.
- Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage money.
- Provision developed in partnership with community organisations.

Examples of Multiply case studies for 2022/23 are contained in **Appendix 1** and include:

- New Start Highland – Learning through practical experience measuring for upholstery materials, pricing, and costing a project in their furniture workshops.
- Barnardo's Works – Employability skills for 16–19-year-olds in the construction industry.
- UHI – Building confidence with numbers; boosting parents' confidence with numbers and to help manage money.
- Enable Works – Supported employment for young people with additional support needs.
- High Life Highland Festival of Maths – Families have fun learning with numbers.

5.5.5 Community development of voice, inclusion, and participation in place planning

CLD in Highland prioritises targeted support for the development of capacity in key areas and of community groups to increase their resilience for the future, while taking an inclusive approach to create opportunities for voice and participation of people from

all backgrounds to influence outcomes in Highland communities. Case studies included in the full report include:

- Big Blue Box - an anchor and safe space for young people in Kinlochbervie working with partners to improve mental health, opportunities to grow and develop, food growing and behaviour in class.
- Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) governance training for Dingwall Community Centre with an organisational health check to review policies, procedures, and processes.
- [Have your say | The Highland Council](#) – Highland wide community engagement to ask people's views on how they would like to see area-based funding being prioritised and developed through community projects in their local area. The example of [Community Funding Priorities - Have Your Say Easter Ross | Highland Place Planning \(engagehighland.co.uk\)](#) contains survey results.
- Kinlochleven Community Action Group (CAG) brings together community groups, public sector and other agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage in Lochaber with information held on a well-informed website called [Kinlochleven Futures](#) built for the Local Place Plan work.

5.6 Focus Year Three

- The CLD partnership will co-produce the new 3-year CLD Plan for 2024 to 2027 which will be underpinned by the emerging strategic priorities of the HOIP review (People, Place and Prosperity) and the Scottish Government framework for [Community learning and development: guidance for 2024 to 2027](#). Community participation and the learner's voice will be at the heart of the plan. The timeline for the development of the new plan is proposed below:
 - Period of engagement with existing and potential CLD stakeholders (May-Jun)
 - Highland CLD governance structures provide analysis of engagement data (Jun)
 - Production of draft plan by CLD governance groups (Jul)
 - Draft CLD plan presented for consideration by CPP board (prior to Sep 20th)
 - Presentation of Highland CLD plan 24/27 to education committee (Sep 12th)
- The CLD Strategic Partnership has reviewed its Terms of Reference (ToR) and are continuing to strengthen the Highland CLD partnership in 2023/24 with strategic partners demonstrating commitment by engaging with their partners on the CLD Operational group at their bi-monthly meetings.
- The Highland Community Planning Partnership Team continue to be ambassadors for community planning in 2024/25, supporting the alignment of strategic and local priorities, and connecting community partnerships to deliver a consistent approach to community planning across Highland. The team is represented at a strategic and operational level in Highland CLD.
- The Highland Adult Learning Development Group (HALDG) is embedding a more collaborative approach to partnership working for Highland Multiply with the aim of sharing cross-sector learning and identifying good practice among

partners. Their focus on reflective practice is contextualised against the National Adult Learning Strategy 2022/27, the Highland CLD Plan and the *How Good is Our CLD?* Delivery of Services challenge question. It will help to redefine and refine the learner offer by exploring the most successful elements of Multiply, the challenges and how the partners have overcome barriers to learning in Multiply.

- HLH will continue to support young people to run Youth Forums in all 29 ASGs.
- The HALDG will create an Adult Learner Forum.
- Representatives from the Highland CLD partnership (THC, HLH, HTSI & Youth Highland) will engage with the Independent National CLD Review process in 2024.
- Workforce development will continue to be a focus for the CLD partnership with the input from Learn North of a joint Training Needs Analysis for the new CLD plan.

5.7 Education Scotland Engagement of Highland CLD Partners.

Following a progress report submitted by the CLD Strategic Partnership in July 2022, a meeting took place with HM Inspectors in August 2022 where it was reported that work is progressing to strengthen the alignment of local provision with strategic priorities; there is a shared sense of direction in place and the governance has been strengthened. Joint evaluation and performance monitoring was also noted as an area of improvement. This continues to be a focus for the partnership as partners recognise there is still work to do to fully capture and report the impact of CLD across Highland.

Education Scotland has provided notice of the date for the Highland CLD inspection visit which will take place between Monday 3 and Wednesday 5 June 2024.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1
- The CLD partnership will continue to work together to deliver on the CLD priorities for Year 3 of the plan. The role of the partnership will be key to the successful Implementation of CLD across Highland communities and ongoing analysis.
 - The CLD partnership will co-produce the new 3-year CLD Plan for 2024 to 2027 which will be underpinned by the emerging strategic priorities of the HOIP review and include the learner's voice and community participation at the centre.
 - The CLD Strategic Group will continue to build a strong CLD partnership in Highland by providing strategic direction for the CLD Operational Group with support from the Highland Community Planning Partnership Team.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – People

Date: 16 May 2024

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Appendices: Appendix 1: CLD Action Plan Year 2 Progress Report



Improvement priority 1: Mental Health & Wellbeing (please see the [full report](#))

The CLD community in Highland will prioritise working together to improve the levels of mental health and wellbeing experienced by people in our communities. This work will be targeted towards those at greater risk of poorer outcomes.

CLD in Practice – spotlight on Mental Health & Wellbeing work

[Growing2Gether](#) is a Youth Social Action Group with students from Inverness Royal Academy, Tain Royal Academy, Invergordon Academy and Millburn Academy Inverness. The initiative helps young people, aged 14-16, to realise they can make a difference in another person's life and that engage positively in their [community](#). They have an 18-week placement in the children’s nursery accompanied by peer group sessions with trained facilitators, covering topics such as self-esteem, self-management and understanding negative behaviour. The programme recognises the importance of *meaning* as a requirement for wellbeing and positive engagement within society. The increase in vital social skills helps the young people to re-engage with their education and their community in a positive way, leading to a nationally recognised SCQF Level 4 Qualification in Personal Development (Self in the Community/Self Awareness Units) supported by UHI.

Of the young people who have engaged with *Growing2gether* project:

- 70% said it made them feel more confident in their abilities.
- 18% said there was an improvement in their mental health and wellbeing.
- 21% said there was an increase in their self-esteem.
- 100% of young people who finished Growing2gether, and 85% of starters, gained an accredited personal development qualification, encouraging them to re-engage in their community and school.

Tracking Young people for a positive destination

The Growing2Gether team pride themselves on [partnership working](#), where the Highland Council has tracked 233 young people with 93% having reached a positive destination upon leaving school. There is a 2–3 year time lag as young people do the programme when they are 13-14 years of age, which strengthens the outcomes.


“I love coming to the nursery... it’s my best day in the whole week ‘cos I know that what I am doing is positive and the child I am working with runs up to me smiling...I feel like I’m making a difference.”



[Outcome evaluations](#) since 2017 to 2023 are highlighted in the infographic below:



Actions	Progress made	BRAG
<p>NEW ACTION FOR YEAR 2</p> <p>1. Identify and test a shared approach of how CLD partners can measure increased wellbeing as a result of taking part in CLD Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Life Highland (HLH) has shared their Youth Work and Adult Learning 2023 Annual Reports, along with individual case studies shared via the CLD reporting form and information to update the action plan from My Future My Success • The Highland Council has shared case studies and data from Highland Cares, Employability and Whole Family Wellbeing. • The CLD partnership is working alongside the Community partnership team and the Corporate Business Performance team to look at improving data sharing and identifying the impact of CLD for year 3 and the new CLD plan. • Youth Highland and Voluntary Youth Network have shared their annual report for 2022/23 with several other case studies and information to populate the CLD year 2 report and for the upcoming new CLD plan 24/27. • Case studies Lead Scotland, Social Enterprise Academy, Thriving Families, New Start Highland, WEA, Caithness Planning Partnership, Sutherland Planning Partnership, Lochaber Planning Partnership, Kinlochbervie Big Blue Box, NHS Highland, Change Mental Health, Enable Works, Development Trusts, community hubs and community groups. <p>Evidence of improved outcomes related to improved data sharing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In use: Short Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) 7-point scale • In use: SHANNARI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included) • In use: 5 Ways to Wellbeing • HLH is working with NHSH on how to measure wellbeing effectively and consistently across services. Many of the CLD Operational Group members measure wellbeing using SWEMWBS as a single tool. <p>A case study using SWEMWBS to measure the impact on wellbeing from Merkinch Creativity for Adult Learner Wellbeing Group.</p>	
<p>2. Create, deliver and gather data - Identify and promote the use of recognised and validated wellbeing measures and tools for CLD partners to evidence impact of CLD interventions</p>	<p>North Highland Community Link Worker Project</p> <p>NHS North Highland Community Link Worker (CLW) Project for social prescribing with Change Mental Health collaborates with 29 selected GP surgeries across the Highlands – from Caithness to Lochaber and over to Nairn. Referrals are received from the GP to Community Link Workers (CLWs) when there might be a concern caused by social factors, rather than a medical problem. The CLWs use a person-centred approach to co-develop a plan with the client to help them feel a sense of achievement and build confidence to achieve outcomes, priorities and goals which are reviewed at the final session. People face multiple and complex challenges including mental health, social isolation, loneliness, poor housing conditions, unhealthy relationships, poor physical health, language barriers, discrimination, and more. The CLWs socially prescribe to relevant services, such as walking groups and exercise classes or skills development.</p> <p>The NHS North Highland Community Link Worker Project Year 1 report from May 2022 to April 2023 highlights that the CLW project targeted the needs and demands of the practice and practice populations of the Highland HSCP using data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and Community Health Index General Practice lists. The data reviewed that 38.5% of patient numbers (n. 354 out of 920 referrals) were for clients living within the Highland HSCP Scottish Index of Multiple</p>	

<p>“The service has done so much for me, and I am going to keep going to these resources.”</p>	<p>deprivation 2020 deciles 1 and 2 (target population). The CLW Project Manager at Change Mental Health, summarised the overall SWEMWBS results from the CLW project from 25th April 2021 to 31st Jan 2024 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,096 referrals over 31 GP surgeries • Client demographic 66% females, 34% males • Most common age group is 55-64 years • 78% positive change, 14% negative change, 8% no change <p>Healthy Minds</p> <p>An example of social prescribing is through the Healthy Minds project supported by Cairngorms National Park and HLH Badenoch, Strathspey and Nairnshire Countryside Rangers funded through the 2022 Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund. It engages with vulnerable adults suffering from diagnosed mental health issues who have struggled to cope since Covid. Social prescribing is made through the Aviemore Community Mental Health team or on a self-referral basis, providing an alternative pathway for adults who are facing hospitalisation, medication, exclusion, and loneliness. The peer-to-peer support group meets in a local green space to learn about the natural world and feel the healing benefits of nature with activities such as bushcraft, wildlife identification, wildlife camera trapping, after-dark adventures, and outdoor cooking in safe space with a tarp for shelter, chairs, bean bags and a fire bowl. Video of Healthy Minds project</p> 	
<p>3. Prioritise and target CLD resource in CP areas to reduce social isolation & loneliness</p> <p>“Seeing these young people blossom by leaving their comfort zones and thoroughly enjoy themselves was incredible.” Youth Worker</p>	<p>There is evidence of targeted CLD interventions in place across all 9 Community Partnerships where learners report reduced feelings of loneliness and isolation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLH Learner survey includes a question on the impact of the service to reduce social isolation and loneliness. • HLH Youth Work <i>Get Involved</i> strand uses the power of relationships to build trust and connection with young people who are at the heart of the learning experience. The youth work team ensures that young people have safe places to go, enjoy fun activities that involve play, leading to fulfilling lives by achieving their potential. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>The HLH rural youth work provision demonstrates the level of involvement from young people with over 600 programmed opportunities each month to <i>Get Involved</i> in HLH Youth Work. For example, the Youth Work team supports young people in the Fort William Street Work by meeting them on a Friday and Saturday night in their environment, on their terms, to enable a more equal, respectful rapport between staff and young people. If challenging situations arise, extra support sessions are provided by partner agencies (Police Scotland & Social Work)</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLH Adult Learning Operational Plan is annex to their learning offer, with the secondary outcome aimed at reducing isolation and loneliness. The Learning plans and 3 monthly reviews capture data on the reduction of loneliness and isolation. 	

- The Adult Learning practitioners demonstrate a genuine commitment to provide a quality learner-centred service to people in friendly and welcoming environments. Each year hundreds of people learn new skills, gain confidence, progress to further, learning, achieve qualifications and improve their prospects for life and work, all of which achieve better outcomes for people living in the Highlands.
- Feedback from HLH adult learners, is overwhelmingly positive with 98% of learners saying they *gained confidence* and *improved their core skills*.

Key data from the 2023 HLH Adult Learning report is highlighted below:



33,144, hours of learning provided



Learners are from 34 different nationalities



Offer 24 different SQA Awards



98% of learners report improved confidence

Case Studies in the full report

- **Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh, Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations** delivered over 2,300 hours of volunteer befriending service, a Day Hospital project, 2,000 calls supporting Covid-19 emergency response, a green health project, an active travel project, support to families through the Afghanistan resettlement scheme, a post-covid re-engagement program and a pilot project to connect people when discharged from hospital.
- **Highland Coastal Communities Funded Project Thurso Wellbeing and Resilience** with HLH Youth Work team and Caithness Cares provided a fully supported and dedicated programme of experiences and opportunities for those at risk of poor outcomes and quality of life. Between April and June 2023, the project assisted 27 students to complete a Dynamic Youth Award. These include 12 students who attended the Fairburn residential trip, as well as 10 students who participated in the Fire Skills programme at Thurso Fire Station in May.
- **Thriving Families** provides information, advice and a support service for anyone involved in the care of children and young people (up to age 25) for Additional Support for Learning in Highland. They use an empowerment model to identify client’s strengths, build their confidence and capacity to make changes that improve their lives. In 2023, Thriving Families has supported Cared for **235 individuals**, children, young people and families facing a huge range of challenges and have seen a 47% increase in the support time required to meet the needs of families in the current context [Thriving Families Annual Report 2023](#).

4. Identify and pursue funding opportunities to increase the capacity of CLD to

Highland Cares – Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

The Highland Cares Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund programme delivers new and enhanced community-based mental health and wellbeing supports and services for children, young people (aged 5 to 24 and up to 26 if care experienced), their families and carers. The programme is guided by the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports

contribute to health and wellbeing outcomes.

“Thanks to Highland Cares funding we were able to offer this camp for free which removed access barriers for the most vulnerable groups in our area. We were able to provide hot breakfast and lunches for all the children across the week and thanks to additional donations were able to send children away with food at the end of the days.”

and Services Framework and underpinned by the values, principles and components of GIRFEC, ensuring it is responsive to local needs and systems. It supports and improves the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and their families and services are provided by people with the right knowledge, skills and experience to support them.

A total investment of £1,628,444.90 has been made through the children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing fund across 145 projects in each of the 9 Highland Council CPP areas and regionally through Highland-wide projects during 2022 and 2023.

A [full report](https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Improvement-Priority-1-Mental-Health-Wellbeing.pdf) on the Improvement Priority for Mental Health & Wellbeing which includes details of the CLD services and projects with supporting case studies can be found on the HCPP website by visiting <https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Improvement-Priority-1-Mental-Health-Wellbeing.pdf>

HTSI Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund 2022 and 2023

The Scottish Government Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund (CMH&WF) is managed and distributed in Highland by Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI). The annual reports for 2022 and 2023 demonstrate the level of investment made in the third sector and community groups for projects aimed at people over the age of 16 years to improve their mental health and wellbeing and reduce social isolation and loneliness. Within Highland the 9 Community Planning Partnerships identified the key areas of disadvantage and in need to direct support to address inequality of life outcomes.

- In 2022, the [CMH&W Fund Year 1 Report](#) details a total investment of **£983,521.48 across 95 projects**.
- In 2023, the [CMH&W Fund Year 2 Report](#) details a total investment of **£704,889 across 75 projects**.

High Life Highland Funding Officer

HLH provides a permanent funding officer who maintains and shares a funding matrix across partners. A total of 18 funding applications to different funders were successful in 2022/23 amounting to £130,433 investment across a range of applications for HLH Adult Learning and Youth Work services, and on behalf of 3rd sector organisations and community groups where added value was provided to the project by HLH services such as the Countryside Rangers.

Youth Highland - Young Grant Givers

In 2023 Youth Highland co-ordinated a participatory budgeting process for young people. The project was funded by HADP, The National Lottery and The Corra Foundation. Young people (individuals and groups) were able to apply for a maximum of £3000 to fund their projects. Over 10 months and 4 funding phases a total of £78,539.00 was distributed to 32 projects that were delivered between December 2022 and October 2023.

5. Scope and develop new partnership opportunities and synergies with other sectors beyond CP partners

Creativity in Care Highland Carer’s Roadshow and Windows on Reality event

[Creativity in Care CIC](#) is a visionary third sector organisation which has a mission to “create high quality connections through socially engaged arts and programmes, steered by individuals, families and communities, to improve quality of life, inclusion and joyfulness.” In 2023, Creativity in Care (CIC) saw the culmination of 2 years partnership working with Connecting Carers, Thriving Families, Change Mental Health, NHS Highland, Partners in Advocacy, Lord Lieutenant of Ross and Cromarty and

“The art testimonies are powerful. It made me wonder how I might express my own.”

Alzheimer Scotland on the *Windows of Reality* project. The Installation Performance Art showcased all-embracing life experiences about Covid-19 told through the eyes of 100 puppets. The stories and puppets were made by individuals and families from Caithness, East and West Ross-Shire, Sutherland, Inverness-Shire and Lochaber.

Highland Champs

Highland Champs and Highland Little Champs is a participation and advocacy group for Highland-based children and young people who are care experienced, whether in residential care, foster homes, adopted, a care leaver, looked after at home, kinship care or other. The Highland Council team works with corporate parents including Police Scotland Highland & Islands division, High Life Highland, and The Promise Scotland who actively support the work being done around improving care experience for children and young people to help raise awareness and challenge the stigma that still surrounds care experience, as well as what that means for many children, young people and families in Highland. A film event in February 2023 gave a voice to care experienced young people and a Care Convention to look at how corporate parents shape care and #KeepThePromise. Partners include UHI Shetland, Moniak Mhor, Who Cares? Scotland, The Promise and Life Changes Trust.

In March 2023 the Highland Child Protection Committee Conference #HelpingHandHighland took place in Eden Court Theatre, demonstrating support for care-experienced young people from a broad range of organisation including CALA, Mikeysline, Home-Start East Highland, Inverness Women's Aid, Snap Inverness, Highland Champs, The Highland Council, Inspiring Young Voices, Thriving Families, Safe Strong & Free, Highland Alcohol & Drugs Partnership and Highlands and Islands Police Division.



Highland Action for Little Ones

Based in Inverness, [Highland Action for Little Ones \(HALO\)](#) aims to uplift and empower families and children living in poverty and fleeing domestic violence by providing essential support and resources. They collect donations of new and pre-loved clothes, nappies, cots and baby equipment and work closely with social services, Women's Aid and other organisations to distribute these items to families in need across Highland. They have built partnerships with many private sector organisations and in September 2023 won the Highland Third Sector Judges Recognition Award for the work they do in the community.

The Highland Council is supporting the Child Protection Scotland's [#ItsOkayToAsk](#) campaign which encourages any parent or carer who is struggling to meet the financial demands of looking after their children to ask for help before reaching crisis point. In November 2023 Councillors who hold a role as the Council's Children and Young People Champions recognised that Highland already had higher than national average rates of fuel poverty and asked parents impacted by the cost-of-living crisis to seek support before reaching financial crisis.

Improvement priority 2: Voice, Inclusion & Participation (please see the [full report](#))

CLD will make it a priority to listen to those individuals and groups who want to but have little or no connection with decision makers and service budget holders; and support them to influence the positive changes that are required to improve the lives of under-represented and seldom heard people.

CLD in Practice – spotlight on Voice, Inclusion & Participation



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POILEAS ALBA



Merkinch and South Kessock Children and Young Peoples Plan

Youth Highland has been working with the Merkinch and South Kessock CP Locality Planning Group for a year. Initial meetings brought together voluntary and community organisations and activists with statutory providers. Main findings of these meetings included:

- Local people felt the existing planning processes were not working for them and did not enable meaningful community engagement and voice.
- There was a need to review the existing plan and priorities to better meet the needs of local people.
- There was a vital need to get local planning and actions right for children and young people to improve worsening outcomes for local people and the wider community.

Over 9 months Youth Highland carried out a wide consultation exercise carried out in the primary and secondary schools and in community settings. They spoke to nearly 400 children and young people and gathered their voices and opinions about a range of topics. The findings include:

UNCRC Rights

- Young people viewed the following UNCRC articles to be important and relevant to them: The right to privacy, The right to be treated with respect, The right to feel safe, The right to relax and play, The right to a voice and have it taken seriously, The right to meet friends and take part in groups, The right to learn.
- This enabled them to work together to create sentences which started with a UNCRC right, identified a problem and a solution.
- The result was a set of priorities to take to the CP Locality Planning Group to agree actions.

A community health check:

YH asked ten quick-fire questions to all the groups about how they felt about living here (yes, no, don't know answers)

Using the Youth Work outcomes to check in with individual young people, YH provided the opportunity for young people to answer a set of anonymous questions that were based around youth work outcome statements with questions such as How do you feel about life? What new things do you want to try? What changes would you like to see in your community?


Collating the evidence

During a residential trip between Oct 20th – 22nd 2023, YH worked with a group of 5 young people from Merkinch and South Kessock to collate and understand the information and to agree several priorities to take back to the CP Locality Planning Group. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was used as a tool to help YH sort the issues that had come out of conversations with young people. This enabled the deficit issues to be sorted on one side of the triangle and aspirational issues on the other.

Next steps:

- CP Locality Planning Group to identify actions and organisations or individuals to lead on each action and adopt these actions as part of the locality action plan.
- Young people need supporting to present this information in a way which they want to people in power and to make a short film, PPT and a script.
- Young people need to be supported to work in partnership with adults to take forward the actions and make positive changes happen.



Actions	Progress made	BRAG
<p>1. Provide and coordinate learning and support for marginalised individuals and groups to participate in decision making/co-design of services, including CLD provision.</p>	<p>The quarterly CLD reports by CP area demonstrate progress across CLD provision. HLH Adult Learning Annual Report 2023 provides evidence of co-production from marginalised individuals and groups.</p> <p>Refugees and Nature for Health - Nature for Health green health programme Over the course of a year Nature for Health ran a series of outdoor activities for refugee families from Syria and Afghanistan, now settled in the Highlands. On average there were 33 people attending the six events with a maximum of 44 at one session in Golspie. These events featured combinations of fire-making, sharing food, family games, pétanque, crafts, storytelling, nature walks and sensory activities. The general approach was based around active sessions where there was less need for communication such as crafts and sensory activities. Participants with excellent English helped to get messages and stories across to others with little or no English. Eating together and making social connections was a central part of the day but the group activities and games were also important elements.</p>  <p>See the full document on HCPP for case studies including: Inspiring Young Voices is a voice for young refugees and asylum seekers from any country of origin. As part of their Inspire Highland project, they have secured funding from the National Lottery New Scots fund to work alongside young refugees and asylum seekers in Highland, up to the age of 25, to come together to speak out and have their voices, views and experiences heard. Partners in the project include: Youth Highland, Highland One World Global Learning Centre, Inverness Masjid Highland Central Mosque, The Highlands Support Refugees, Highlands for Ukraine, Highland Migrant and Refugee Action (HiMRA), Thriving Families, Alness Academy, Nairn Academy, Inverness High school, Dingwall Academy and High Life Highland.</p> <p>Highland One World Global Learning Centre is one of the partners which supports school pupils in the Highlands and Islands to promote Global Citizenship and Learning for Sustainability (LfS) through active and participatory learning. They have produced a padlet with resources to support discussions with primary and secondary school pupils related to learning around the Palestine-Israel conflict.</p> <p>HLH - ESOL for Driving Courses Driving Theory is a popular learning goal among migrant and refugee communities through HLH <i>ESOL for Driving courses</i>. This is particularly meaningful for Afghan women because, in Afghanistan, driving licenses for women are largely prohibited. Seven Afghan women attended ESOL for Driving classes with one learner has already passed her theory test and is ready to embrace the practical stage of the challenge. Community-based ESOL contextualises learning in its social context. Learners don't only develop language skills but learn about cultural customs of their subject to help them navigate life in a new place. Learners' long-term goals include the ability to make journeys independently and to access services, employment, medical appointments, leisure and recreation, and family time in local green spaces. Driving provides learners with freedom, flexibility and independence but, for ESOL learners, this all starts in the ESOL classroom.</p>	

“The kite-flying session delivered in the playground was spectacular! It was important for these families that in their new host country and community, they can openly make and fly the Afghan kites, and acknowledge the importance of their cultural heritage and traditions.”

Swimming together - Thanks to a partnership with the Community Sport Hub (CSH), Syrian Refugee women in Dingwall have an opportunity to enjoy swimming for the first time years in the Mediterranean Sea back in Syria, helping to improve their social, mental and physical wellbeing. The classes held at Dingwall Leisure Centre are fully delivered by female swimming instructors, with female lifeguards on hand. To allow the Syrian refugee community to participate, the hub purchased modesty swimwear, which was provided to the women, so they could adhere to their religious beliefs.



The sessions ran for 12 weeks, after which the women were encouraged and confident enough to continue their practice in the ongoing women's only community sessions. Five ladies attended the swimming lessons, with 10 others attending the general ladies swimming sessions. The classes aimed to familiarise and develop the groups basic swimming skills to help them gain competence and confidence in the water. One lady said: "I am in my forties and have never swum before, so these sessions have made me learn that it is never too late to try something new."

Traditional Kite Making to inspire Hope

A creative project for Afghan resettler communities in August 2023 has helped to build English language skills, social and culture cohesion and integration as part of the Scottish Refugee Festival funded by the Scottish Refugee Council. The theme of the festival was 'Hope' therefore, '[The Afghan Kites of Hope](#)' was in honour of the tradition of kite making - a custom prohibited by the Taliban in their home country. The idea was also to welcome newly arrived Afghan families by celebrating and learning about their cultural heritage, inviting them to share their traditions and skills with Adult Learning and their new host community. Farkhonda Kabiri and Yalda Rasooli from the Scottish Refugee Council attended where they shared their resettling experience in Inverness and joined in the kite-making, making a comment about the benefits of the activity:






Ukrainian Language Learning Platform

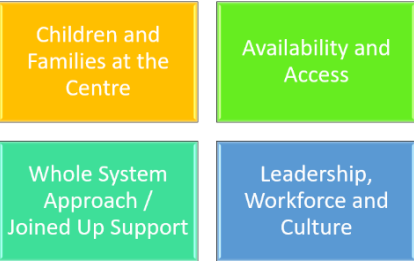
HLH libraries also provide a Ukrainian Language Learning Platform. [ODILO](#) offers Ukrainian children, their families and teachers an unlimited learning platform. The app includes almost 2,000 eBooks in Ukrainian ranging from specialised non-fiction texts to general fiction, including a collection for children and young adults. Parents can sign up to receive reports on their child's reading and there's also a really good selection of ESOL graded readers and an option for parents to monitor their child's progress.






LGBT Youth

LGBT Youth have a Domestic Abuse Project and are running a series of free digital seminars exploring LGBTQ+ Peoples' Experiences of Domestic Abuse. The half-day training allows participants to:

- Increase understanding of language and terminology relating to LGBTQ+ identities
- Reflect on the nature of homo/bi/transphobia and understand how these impacts on LGBTQ+ people's experience of domestic abuse and consider how these impact on their access to support services.

	<p>They are particularly keen to engage front-line workers in public services such as Health, Housing, Social Work, Policing and the criminal justice system, as well as third sector organisations that provide support, advice, or information to survivors.</p>
<p>2. Contribute to the development of a codesigned Youth Participation Framework (CYP Charter) – this action is being led by ICSP Rights and Participation Group – CLD support</p>	<p>HLH and Highland Youth Committee has led on the co-production of The Charter for Children and Young People. The Charter was launched at the Highland Youth Parliament (HYP) Conference on 23rd June 2023 and developed at Highland Chat4Change which is a Healthy Minds partnership with Inspiring Young Voices, Highland Council, the Youth Convener, Highlife Highland, Voluntary Youth Network and CALA to enable children and young people to be in dialogue with decision makers.</p> <p><i>Getting Heard – with support from HLH Youth Work</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80 young people representing all 9 Community Planning Partnership areas attended the 2023 annual Highland Youth Parliament Conference in June. “Our Youth Forums get involved in their communities. They organise and deliver activities for others, and they fundraise for community projects such as a Defibrillator in one of the villages” – YDO Golspie To increase and encourage participation amongst young people, the 2022-23 Highland Youth Convener Caitlyn Munro visited schools/youth forums/youth groups across Highland to meet groups of young people face-to-face and encourage them to speak up in confidence, to inspire young people to talk about anything they feel strongly about, reassuring them that people do want to hear from them. The new Youth Convener for 2023-24, Orla Macleod from Skye, is focusing on completing her tour of schools following the excellent work of her predecessor who visited 23 out of 29 secondary schools in the previous year. Orla is focusing on tackling bullying in the LGBT+ community and improving access to mental health services for young people.  
<p>3. Plan and deliver workshops in all CP areas around incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law and other relevant policy developments including trauma</p>	<p>The UNCRC workshops were delivered by the CLDSO in Autumn/Winter 2022/23</p> <p>Education Scotland delivered a session for partners in Autumn 2022</p> <p>The Highland Council The Whole Family Wellbeing Programme (WFWP) aims to improve families’ wellbeing by providing advice and support to enable them to avoid crisis. The programme has received 2 years funding from the Scottish Government: £1.2 million in 2022/23 and £1.2 million in 2023/24. The team of 6 Locality Co-ordinators will operate over the 9 Community Partnership areas, pairing up over 3 Localities. In September 2023, the WFWP entered the Evaluation Phase which consists of gathering information and</p> 

<p>informed and the Promise</p>	<p>data through several sources and methods to establish the baseline of need around Holistic Whole Family Wellbeing Support as detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Integrated Children’s Services Performance Management Framework. • A series of Partner Participation Sessions are being held across the nine Community Partnership areas with the gathering of wider data and information from School Participation Sessions and Children and Families Participation • CLD is a thread that runs through the 4 WFWP priorities <p>NHS Education for Scotland (NES) are running webinars in preparation for the UNCRC coming into force in Scotland in July 2024. Their webinars will include: ‘Taking a children’s rights approach to your work’ and ‘How the voice of babies, children and young people enhance our work’.</p>			
<p>4. Deliver awareness raising sessions to CPs on CLD approaches to increasing the inclusion of marginalised adults’ voice and influence in community planning</p>	<p>A pilot awareness raising session was delivered and reviewed by the Highland Adult Learning Development Group (HALDG) in September 2022. Next steps are to have a conversation with Community Support and Engagement team to share approaches.</p> <p>The CLDSO is a member of the HCPP Coordinating Group and contributed to the event in Nov-23 in Merkinch Community Centre preceded by several smaller events in areas to engage with local stakeholders. Presentations were made by the Chair of CLD Strategic Group and the CLDSO on CLD in Highland, the New Integrated Childrens Services Plan, Adult Social Care Draft Plan, Whole Family Wellbeing Programme and Area Place Plans.</p> <p>Highland Community Planning Partnership Support Team</p> <p>In summer 2023 the Highland Community Planning Partnership team of 4 staff was established to support the work of the HCPP and coordinate activity across Highland to deliver on the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) 2017-2027. The new HCPP website has been developed with information about the 9 CPPs and the HOIP Delivery Groups. The Community Participation and Dialogue Delivery Group focuses on CLD and the webpage includes information on the CLD Plan 2021-24 and the annual progress reports for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The year 2 report for 2022/23 is broken down into 6 tiles on the website page, one for each of the 5 improvement priorities, plus workforce development and these contain the full reports for each of the priorities.</p> <p>A refresh of the HOIP will take place in 2024 to include feedback on the emerging strategic priorities and partnership development opportunities based on HCCP partner discussions and a review of existing and new strategic plans across the partner agencies. The HOIP priorities will underpin the new CLD Plan for 2024/27.</p>			
<p>5. Strengthen and consolidate / develop youth</p>	<p>See the case study from Merkinch and South Kessock Children and Young Peoples Plan in CLD spotlight.</p> <p>Highland Childrens and Young People’s Participation Strategy</p> <p>The Whole Family Wellbeing team are committed to developing Highland Childrens and Young People’s Participation Strategy which will be developed and implemented with the participation of children and young people in Highland at its heart.</p>			

<p>participation structures</p>	<p>Discovery College The Discovery College in Inverness creates a safe space which is designed by and for young people in the Inverness area under 30 who identify as Disabled and/or neurodivergent, LGBTQIA+, Carers, Religious and ethnic minorities and coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. The project is a youth-led collaborative, with participatory research to develop a safe space for young people (16+) in Inverness who are from any underrepresented groups such as (but not exclusive to): LGBTQIA+, ethnic minority, carers, care experienced and/or neurodiverse. The project is funded by The Ideas Fund which is delivered by the British Science Association and funded by <i>Wellcome</i>. The young people are central to the design and delivery of the project, and therefore the research is designed and conducted by young peer-researchers who are being supported by two academic researchers, as well as a small team of consultants and a project lead. Helping young people to design and create a psychologically safe space where they can learn about and explore their feelings and emotions by using different, chosen forms of engagement i.e. film, art therapy and/or (social) entrepreneurship to research the impact of increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence on confidence, resilience and mental health and wellbeing.</p>  <p>The Centred report 2022 on Mental Health and Wellbeing of Highland Youth Part 1 is an exploration into the factors impacting on the mental health and wellbeing of young people in Highland and Mental Health - Exploring the Current Landscape looks at the context of mental health recommendations in Highland over 13 different areas.</p>	
<p>6. Develop /Support local AL Forums in CP areas</p>	<p>The Highland Adult Learning development group is engaging with partners to discuss the goal of creating Adult Learner Forums in Highland. To be actioned in 2024/25.</p>	
<p>7. Provide a youth led voice, inclusion and participation annual summary report to THC Education Cttee and HCPP</p>	<p>Highland Youth Convenor Roadshow report 2022/23 was presented to Education Committee June-23. Annual Highland Youth Parliament (HYP) Conference Report 2023</p> <p>Highland Youth Parliament 2023 The HYP Education Conference in June 2023 focussed around five main topics: Education, Mental Health Support, Skills for Life, Participation and Rural Accessibility. Education Discussion groups took place with young people from different areas to talk about specific topics on Career Pathways, Mental Health Support, Exams and SQA, and Equality and Equity. The Q&A Panel listened to the young people as they spoke about the challenges they face at school and wanted to hear about what was being done to tackle issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion in schools, availability of subjects, school meals and transport.</p>	
<p>8. Facilitate annual Big Community Conversation to inform on going needs analysis/ review of CLD delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Community Conversation takes place in September 2024. • HOIP Review 2024 - The HCPP / CLD Strategic Group Chair and Vice Chair are leading on the HOIP review in 2023/24, to be finalised in June 2024. • The National CLD Review Independent Review with Kate Still will take place in Jan-24 with significant input to the consultation process from THC Education, HTSI, and HLH 	

Improvement priority 3: Digital Inclusion (please see the [full report](#))

CLD partners will support digital inclusion. This priority will focus CLD opportunities on increasing; skills, confidence, and access.

CLD in Practice – spotlight on Digital Inclusion [Full report on digital inclusion](#)

Partnership between AbilityNet and Red Chair Highland

In 2022, **AbilityNet** distributed 300 Lenovo digital devices to clients or volunteers at eligible organisations as part of the AbilityNet 'ConnectingU' digital device programme. Aimed at people who are digitally excluded and cannot afford access to an appropriate device, the free Lenovo devices are available to people over the age of 18 with a disability, over the age of 55 and a UK resident. A Vodafone sim card is provided with 6 months free data and unlimited calls and texts. The devices are 3G/4G ready and do not require a MIFI. Free training and advice for using the devices is provided to participants by volunteers who are part of AbilityNet's free Tech Support services.



Red Chair Highland is an example of an outstanding third sector organisation which receives devices from AbilityNet with the goal of breaking down the digital divide, particularly for those who are disproportionately excluded from the digital world. The collaborative partnership between [AbilityNet and Red Chair Highland](#) has enabled people to receive devices, technical support and training required to undertake a wide range of tasks including: Maintaining important contact with support workers and agencies, completing and managing benefit claims, keeping work journals up to date, accessing health and wellbeing services and apps, setting up email for the first time, job searches, studying, energy account management, entertainment and keeping in touch with family and friends. When asked about barriers, perceived or otherwise, experienced by people who are using the tech, *Kirsty from Red Chair Highland* said:

“The recipient often needs support to overcome the micro-barriers which are preventing them from accessing the digital world. These micro barriers often include fear and a lack of confidence and basic digital skills. In older people there is a common belief that it's just not for them. We have found that in-person and remote support can make a massive difference to people who have a self-confessed phobia of digital. Letting them know that there are no silly questions and that many people have similar fears and concerns can really help them to feel more confident about learning how to access the digital world.”



A Red Chair Highland client who received a ConnectingU device said: “I have been able to attend Near Me appointments and take part in online counselling services. I am hopeful to do some College Courses on it. It has been really beneficial as I wouldn't have been able to afford one myself.”

AbilityNet contributed to the [Disability Voices: Digital Divide Report in 2023](#) where people asked for more funding towards training and support groups to teach digital skills, online safety courses and awareness of scams, and Digital Champions to provide support to those who need it. AbilityNet also supports people who have hearing impairments by sharing how assistive devices can empower individuals to overcome communication barriers and fully engage in daily life.

AbilityNet's [Hearing Loss and Computing factsheet](#) shows how computers, tablets and smartphones can be used to enhance listening for people with some degree of hearing loss and is an introduction to some of the key assistive technology available. One in six or around 11 million people in the UK have hearing loss with levels ranging from mild, moderate, severe, or profound. As hearing loss gets progressively worse, difficulties in communicating increase.

1. Through CLD networks ascertain the extent and determinants of digital exclusion by CP area.

"I initially came along to learn about smart phones. People take for granted that you know how to use them, and

sometimes you get left out on a limb. I never thought I

could be good on the computer, but I'm starting to learn how to use mine.

My tutor has introduced me to things I'd never done before such as saving my holiday photos onto my computer and creating an email account. Coming to these sessions has taught me a lot and provided me with social time I otherwise don't get due to living alone."

Community Partnership areas have a needs analysis in place to identify the extent of digital exclusion in their area, ensuring that free basic digital skills training is available in accessible venues. There is evidence of strong partnership working between third sector organisations and the public sector with referral pathways in place across the partners.



Adult Learner, Leonard, shares his experiences:

High Life Highland Adult Literacy and Numeracy

Adults across Highland can take part in learning to develop their skills and confidence, meet new people, and make positive changes in their life. HLH has a diverse range of free adult literacy and numeracy learning programmes which support people to learn everyday tasks such as managing a household budget or to earn a qualification that they may not have had the chance to do in school or college. The benefits of developing literacies skills and having the confidence to use them can be far-reaching and life changing. In addition to developing skills, many adult Learners share with staff how their wellbeing has improved, helping them to live fuller lives. Digital skills are high on the agenda for many adults and HLH has a clinic-based provision in place to provide 1-2-1 and group support for learners requiring help with

basic digital skills.

HLH libraries across Highland are a great place to learn something new where free adult literacy and numeracy classes provide support with reading, writing, spelling, and numbers. Adult learners can brush up on computer skills or get started with the basics, gain access to help with job hunting, writing a CV or preparing for interviews. These opportunities can help adults to find work and develop their career.

NHS Highland co-located in libraries

In the wake of the pandemic, partnership links with NHS Highland were further strengthened throughout the year. A community-led support hub was launched at Nairn Library. The drop-in hub brings together organisations within the community who can support local health needs, offering advice and support to individuals where required. An *NHS Near Me hub* opened at Thurso Library. Near Me is a confidential and secure service which allows NHS patients to attend their pre-arranged appointment using a video call, rather than attending in person. For those who do not have digital access from home, the service is being made available via several libraries throughout Scotland. [Scottish Library and Information Council](#) funding has been secured to expand the service to other libraries throughout the Highlands including, Nairn, Inverness, Lochcarron, Lochaber libraries and mobile libraries.

Red Chair Highland Digital Hub – Cyber Resilience and Scam Awareness

Red Chair Highland is running Cyber Resilience workshops at their Digital Hub as well as Scam Awareness sessions in the Spectrum Centre in Inverness. Funded by Cyber Scotland, the workshops are popular for people of all ages to learn about internet safety and scams. They run drop-in sessions at Inverness Foodstuff in Nessbank Church which are designed to help adult learners get the most from their devices. The Digital Champions support learners with basic digital skills, accessibility features and can help with any issues experienced by people using their laptop, tablet, smartphone, or they can also lend devices.

2. Support individuals and families to benefit from funding streams which provide access to free devices / connections

There are several third sector and public sector service providers that support individuals to gain access to free devices and digital connections over the age of 50 years, or over 18 for those who have disabilities. **See case studies from AbilityNet and Red Chair Highland in CLD Spotlight on Digital Inclusion.**

Learn My Way is a website of free online learning for beginners, helping learners to develop digital skills to make the most of the online world. Below is a list of the learning topics available on Learn My Way which can be accessed for free:



Using your device	Staying in touch	Employment and work
Starting to use the internet	Spending money online	Managing your health online
Using email	Online entertainment	Managing your money online
Safety and security online	Working with Office 365	

Digital Champions

Connecting Scotland [Digital Champions](#) help people who receive devices through Connecting Scotland to do things online such as: connecting a device to the internet using the Wi-Fi settings; putting in the password; sharing documents by attaching them to an email; and understanding that not all online information and content that they see is reliable.

LEAD Scotland

LEAD Scotland *Everyday computer skills: a beginner's guide to computers, tablets, mobile phones and accessibility* is provided by LEAD Scotland through The Open University [OpenLearn Create](#) platform. The course is designed to equip learners with the knowledge and skills they need to get started in the digital world. It explores accessible ways to use computers and the internet. By studying the course learners can gain a digital badge by clicking on the 'Enrol' button to do the quizzes and earn the badge. There is a selection of other short [OpenLearn Create courses](#) available for Carers, reflecting on transitions, becoming a corporate parent and criminal justice.

Red Chair Highland - Fix the Digital Divide for Good

Red Chair Highland in Inverness is helping [Good Things Foundation](#) make #DigitalForAll. **Good Things Foundation** has launched a major national campaign that draws attention to digital exclusion and the way that people's lives can change when they become digitally. The campaign includes the [National Digital Inclusion Network](#) which signposts organisations that deliver free digital inclusion support to their local communities.

- **Free mobile data packages** for their communities through the [National Databank](#)
- **Free refurbished devices** for people in need through the [National Device Bank](#)
- **Free digital skills training** through the online platform, *Learn My Way*, helping people gain confidence with the internet.
- Regular digital inclusion grants and community funding opportunities

The Digital Inclusion [Network map](#) shows that there are 4 service providers in Highland including Lairg & District Learning Centre and Red Chair Highland that are members with opportunities for libraries and voluntary action groups to join [here](#) for free.

“I’ve always been interested in computers and how they work, and I’ve been volunteering at ReBOOT for two years. It was really nice to meet Princess Anne and she asked me what I do there every Thursday. I was really pleased to receive the award and it is really good that we’ve been recognised for what we do for the community.”

SCVO Community Learning and Development Device Fund

In 2023 SCVO launched a new fund called the [Community Learning and Development Device Fund](#) which offers funding of up to £15,000 for organisations to purchase digital devices to support learners with Laptops, Tablets, Monitors, Cameras and Mi-fi dongles (hardware only, not data). The [online portal](#) has guidance and application materials. The digital devices must be used by learners to support them in their learning and ownership of the devices must be retained by the applying organisation for their lifetime.

ReBOOT



[ReBOOT](#) is a social enterprise based in Forres that recycles and reuses IT equipment, providing free collection for equipment and local IT recycling for householders and businesses across Scotland. Since 1997, ReBOOT's recycling and refurbishment work is carried out by volunteer staff who receive hands-on experience working with a range of computer systems, building computers, fault-finding, developing office skills, stock management and teamworking skills. Several volunteers have gained Comptia A+ qualifications, an international computer technician certification. Others are trained and certified in Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) while some are keen to develop IT skills to gain the knowledge and confidence, to carry out upgrades on their home PCs. One of the young 19-year-old ReBOOT volunteers is a student at UHI Inverness where he is studying the [Skills Connect: Create Me](#) course at SCQF Level 4. He recently received The [King's Award for Voluntary Service](#) where for he has been volunteering for 2 years dismantling computers.

Thriving Families – Digital Support - The Pines Highland Neurodevelopmental Support

Thriving Families has embraced innovative, creative ways to expand their reach and help overcome the barriers Highland's geography presents. They provide diverse opportunities for families with additional support needs to engage in services, in ways that are accessible to them and meet their needs.

They delivered **12 virtual Pines sessions**, with a focus on neurodevelopmental support, to **380 people** as part of their Pines partnership with the National Autistic Society Scotland and the Pines training team (Highland Council/NHS Highland). Topics included post-16 transitions, autistic masking, waiting for Neurodevelopmental Assessment Service_(NDAS) assessment and building positive partnerships.

Most Pines sessions are filmed with the YouTube [videos](#) receiving **13,800 hits** and providing a lasting resource that families and professionals can access at any time. The Pines Partnership continues to develop the [Pines website](#), which has received **82,000 visits**, a **256% year on year increase**.

In 2023, Thriving Families has also:

- Delivered **100 digital well-being sessions**.
- Run **2 x 6-week watercolour workshops**, providing a short break and opportunity for creativity.
- Produced **18 podcasts** with reliable, well-researched information along with support strategies and signposting.
- More than **300 carers** have joined their private **Facebook** group.
- **Trained 5 people** to deliver an incredible, 8-week early intervention programme (Early Positive Approaches to Support) for carers of children aged 0-5 with an ASN, delivering their first programme online.
- Distributed **50 family well-being packs** to nominated families.
- Launched their **new Family Guide**.

Neurodivergence e-Books

A 9-year-old Nairn boy with autism has been the main driving force behind a charity fundraiser contributing to the purchase of e-Books on neurodivergence for Highland libraries. The e-Books cover a range of **41 titles** for parents, carers and professionals as well as for children and young people [Pines Neurodivergent Collection - National Autistic Society Scotland](#)



3. Coordinate learning opportunities supporting people to “get ready to go digital!”

Enable Works Digital Employability Academy

Enable Works Digital Employability Academy provides learners with fully facilitated employability support to help them improve employability skills such as confidence building, creating a CV, filling in application forms and developing interview skills. Certificates are provided upon completion and signposting to job club opportunities. The employability support is funded by the Highland Council’s Highland Cares initiative for Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross.

My World of Work digital career platform

My World of Work provides information on a digital platform to help young people with career advice, learn and train and getting a job. The interactive platform encourages young people to take control of their career as seen in the short [video](#).

Skills Development Scotland

In January 2023 SDS ran a webinar calling all parents and carers to join a webinar to find out about Scottish Apprenticeships and how work-based learning can open the door to a wide range of careers.

Education Scotland Planning and self-evaluation in digital practice

Education Scotland has created a framework for CLD providers to make their practice more effective by using digital approaches:

- The [Planning and Self-evaluation template](#) is recommended for use by CLD teams to self-reflect and plan for effective digital incorporation within their practice.
- The [improving digital practice within CLD](#) guidance provides examples of what best practice in digital CLD might look like for youth work, adult learning, community development and family learning.



The Highland Adult Learning Development Group (HALDG) is co-chaired by LEAD Scotland and HLH who have been circulating a matrix to Highland Multiply partners to identify the provision of courses being delivered and to develop a more collaborative approach to partnership working that will improve learner outcomes. The aim is to share cross-sector learning among partners and identify good practice within the group by exploring: 1. What are the most successful elements of Multiply? 2. What have the challenges been? 3. How have partners overcome barriers to learning in Multiply?

HLH does not produce its own digital training materials and is interested in a partnership with WEA to support the delivery of their bespoke digital Multiply course. HLH AL tutors can work with a person-centred approach to support learners in a 1-2-1 setting using the WEA Multiply digital course thereby creating a positive pathway for the learner. Currently HLH tutors take referrals from Triage, Job Centre, and the libraries. The [Scottish Union Learning](#) (SUL) is also keen to work with more community learning projects across Highland as they can facilitate and fund learning. They target workers in low paid, low skilled jobs and on the margins of workplace.

WEA

WEA learners may present with a digital skills issue, however, often there are several social issues such as addiction or mental health problems that come to the surface during a discussion. WEA have been adaptable to provide a mixed bag of digital skills and inclusion, embedding it into both their Multiply programme and their employability programme. They have found that when they do not mention maths and numeracy, that the courses do well, so they are embedding numeracy in everyday normal life skills which has proved more successful.

In particular, the surprise success in 2023 has been the *Introduction to Working as a Pupil Support Staff course*. This online course has allowed people to access their learning in a digital environment pan Highland. It has enabled learners to build their ICT and communication skills by doing two SQA qualifications on the virtual learning environment (VLE). They will then have the skills to apply for jobs as Pupil Support Staff (PSS) in their local schools and colleges. In Dingwall Library, WEA host Drop-In session on Wednesday afternoons from 2–5pm providing Support for Parents and carers (Adults aged 19+) to help with developing children’s numeracy and supporting parents to help with maths homework.

Youth Highland - YouthLink Youth Work Award for LGBTQ+ RPG During their LGBTQ+ Charter Mark, Youth Highland worked with LGBTQ+ young people to address an issue with accessing a gender-neutral loo, this metamorphized into an award-winning Role Playing Game (RPG) [Where’s Your Head At?](#) featuring their experiences, the UNCRC, signposting and activism to

“Tech clubs can help young people develop vital digital skills, particularly for those who may face barriers in accessing formal tech subjects in the curriculum. The clubs offer an enriching experience for all young people regardless of background and skill. There are some fantastic tech clubs in Scotland, and we want to see more of these in Highland.”

make positive change. During Covid, much of their work with young people happened online, helping them to recognise the value of developing more youth led online learning resources and things to do. As a result, the game provides a safe space for young people to explore some challenging issues including drugs and alcohol, consent and relationships, cyber safety, and resilience and UNCRC (human rights). It is an online app and available on Google Classroom with opportunities for youth led youth work resources to be delivered in school as part of PSE curriculum and to gain a Dynamic Youth Award for collecting Cyber Resilience Points. Youth Highland were delighted to win an award at the [YouthLink Scot Youth Work Awards](#) for supporting the young people who created the RPG and who run their LGBTQ+ group in their community.



Third Sector Lab – the Curve

HTSI promotes digital training services from the [Curve](#) which is a digital training initiative run by Third Sector lab and delivers free 90-minute workshops online for third sector organisations. The online workshops aim to build knowledge around the best digital practices, raise awareness of digital tools and help to increase impact with digital. They are run by leading experts who share their knowledge on all things digital and give participants the chance to learn from the best during the live sessions.

Skills Development Scotland Tech Clubs

The growing demand for digital skills in the Highland economy is being addressed by supporting volunteers to [launch 'tech clubs'](#) across the region. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is working with the Scottish Government and Highland Council on the initiative which aims to train volunteers, provide teaching resources and tech kit and trial online delivery to ensure people in rural areas don't miss out.

The pilot programme started in April 2023 when the first hybrid tech club event for Highland secondary school pupils took place. Participants will “code a data selfie” which involves learning data science and coding skills to create their own unique piece of art. Here is a video guide on [how to set up a new Tech Club](#). The Senior Lead Manager for Developing the Young Workforce at Highland Council, Beth Brown said:



According to Phil Ford, Head of Digital Economy, and Financial Services at SDS: “The digital skills gap in Scotland has now become critical and many tech jobs go unfilled every year. This is particularly true of the Highland economy where digital skills and jobs are now essential in non-tech sectors like agriculture, energy, tourism, food and drink and the creative industries.” Partners involved in the initiative are encouraging technology experts and companies, schools, and colleges, third sector and community groups, and libraries and youth clubs to get involved to improve the career prospects of young people in Highland.

Highland Third Sector Mentoring scheme

The Highland Third Sector [Mentoring scheme](#) is a 6-month programme aimed at people in the third sector, private sector and public sector organisations who would like to become a mentor. It provides an opportunity to achieve an independently accredited CPD Standards Office Certificate of Achievement.

4. Develop virtual learning environments for ESOL/Core Skills/Digital Inclusion focussing on: Employment, Work, Financial Capability, Family, Health & Wellbeing

“I feel safe talking about things with the Kooth counsellors. Being anonymous helps me to feel comfortable and it’s harder for me to open up to someone in person.”

HERE for Caithness

[HERE for Caithness](#) is a digital guide to education, resources and services which improve the mental health of the community. The website has an interactive welcome page that encourages visitors to click on items in the virtual room to find a wealth of resources designed to manage mental health and wellbeing such as: Informative videos, open talks with guest speakers and activities provided by local, caring professionals.

Caithness SWAY

[Caithness SWAY](#) is an additional online resource that provides people in Caithness with a wide range of information and resources. The weekly ebulletin factsheet is shared across a wide range of networks further afield in Highland. The SWAY arrives in your inbox every Friday morning at 9am and provides a range of digital resources that signposts to Cost of Living Support, Citizens Advice Scotland’s Gambling Support Service, Mental Health Awareness Training Courses on Teams and more.

Kooth

[Kooth.com](#) is a mental health and wellbeing website which is funded by NHS Highland CAMHS for all 10-18 years in Highland. Kooth offers free, safe, and anonymous support through a variety of support methods, including professional support from fully qualified counsellors, self-help tools, and pre-moderated community spaces. Live online counselling can be accessed 12pm-10pm Monday to Friday and 6pm-10pm Saturday - Sunday, with all other features available 365 days of the year 24/7.

SilverCloud is an evidence-based, digital mental health and wellbeing course which empowers individuals to manage their mental health and wellbeing. The [SilverCloud](#)® by Amwell® interactive courses are referred by GPs in Highland GP practices to support patients, corporate employers, and higher education institutions to deliver effective support at scale.

Highland Overdose Prevention & Engagement (HOPE) App

The [HOPE: Highland Overdose app](#) is available on Apple Store and provides a source of information for people with drug and/or alcohol problems and their families or friends, that helps prevent overdose and encourages engagement. The useful information covers how to respond to a drug overdose to save someone’s life, harm reduction, recovery, Local drug and alcohol support.

The **Prevent Suicide Highland app** is in the same format as HOPE. People can access urgent help, or create a safety plan with coping strategies, reasons to live, local services for suicide prevention, drugs/alcohol/gambling, LGBT, mental health, bullying, domestic and sexual abuse, self-harm and bereavement; as well as find out how to help someone else they are worried about, learning the art of listening and having difficult conversations.

Welcome to **HERE FOR CAITHNESS**, a digital guide to resources and services which improve the mental health of our community.

HERE

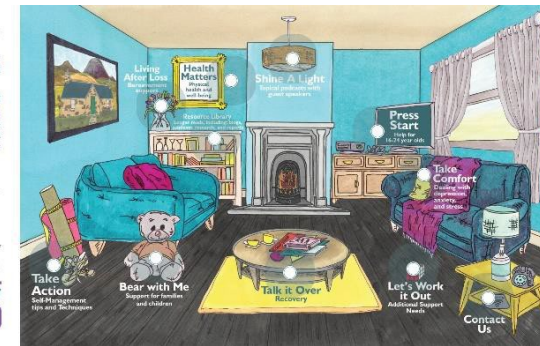
FOR CAITHNESS
Help, Education & Resources for Everyone's Mental Health

Click on items in our virtual room to find a wealth of resources, such as:

- Informative videos
 - Open talks with guest speakers
 - Activities provided by local, caring professionals
- All designed to help you manage your mental health.
- All access is anonymous, and any interaction with our team professionals is confidential.
- Take time to explore, and discover the right help for you in your own time, right here in Caithness. We hope you enjoy your visit. Feel free to return as often as you like.

OUT OF HOURS SUPPORT

[Click Here](#)



Discovery College

The [Discovery College](#) in Inverness has a range of digital health and wellbeing courses. *Connection, Hope and Belonging* are their core values which make a difference to recovery. Here is a [leaflet with the courses](#) for Autumn 2023. Examples of their online courses include: *Making Space for Me* which is for anyone who supports those living with a mental health or substance use concern. *Calm to Connect* is an online hour of relaxation to learn about different styles of meditation with time to put this into practice.

Parent Network Scotland

[Parent Network Scotland](#) supports parents and their families with positive wellbeing and healthy relationships to ensure children receive the best start in life. They offer a Wellbeing toolkit to parents that has the tools and techniques to enhance the whole family experience and help with difficult emotions. Free family online courses include *Parenting Masterclasses* and *Parents Plus online* programmes run by fully trained family facilitators, all of whom have completed our programmes. The parent-to-parent model that PNS subscribes to shows that parents with the right support can enjoy parenting to the fullest.

HLH Digital ESOL classes

HLH delivers both face-to-face and digital ESOL classes using **Google Meet** in Wick and Thurso. There are additional digital classes for the other 6 area programmes which can be accessed anywhere in Highland subject to numbers.

Thriving Families

Thriving Families provide the following digital peer support sessions on Zoom: Share & Care on Wednesdays, Let it Out on Thursday evenings and Well-being Saturdays. Information sessions are available on MS Teams to find out about their services.

Police Scotland

[Community Confidence Action Research](#) was undertaken by The Scottish Police Authority in Wick. They shared a brief outline of some of the initiatives proposed as actions for moving forward in a digital document on Caithness SWAY.

Ideas for Enhancing Confidence

- Increasing Police Presence at Community Events (Presence)
- Regular Communication to the Community (Communication)
- Engagement and Resource Sustainability (Contact/Engagement)
- Advocating for a better system-wide response to 24/7 mental health / safeguarding demand.
- Extending the Police Scotland Youth Volunteers programme to more communities, including Wick.
- Increasing police staff resources to ensure resilient staffing of front office counters at police stations.
- Promoting local recruitment to the police to encourage greater retention of experienced officers.
- Developing the Community Championing role
- Encouraging greater sustainability about funding for projects beyond short-term arrangements.



- More effective transitions to positive destinations and new opportunities
- Improved life potential
- Increased community engagement
- Reduced social isolation

There is evidence of longer-term outcomes being demonstrated under the short to medium term actions listed above. Data could be gathered by organisations by following up with learners approx. 3 to 6 months after their engagement with learning services to identify where the learner is at and how effective the learning has been in terms of progression.

National statistics and trends which demonstrate the digital and financial divide.

In today's digital society, equal access to the internet is not a reality. It is helpful to look at national research and data that identifies trends in digital and financial capability. The [Lloyds Bank 2023 Consumer Digital Index](#) is the UK's largest study of financial and digital capability in people's lives. The study uses the behavioural and transactional data of one million consumers to build a view of digital and financial capability across the UK, including people's ability to manage their money, find a job and build or grow a business.

The report highlights the impact of the digital divide in the UK:

- 25% of the UK have the lowest digital capability and as a result are likely to struggle interacting with online services.
- 2.1 million people in the UK are offline.
- c.4.7 million people cannot connect to Wi-Fi, impacting their everyday lives.
- Those with the lowest capability are more likely to be over 70, however, there are over 300,000 people under the age of 50 who are digitally disadvantaged.



The [Impact Report 2022 The Power of Lived Experience](#) shows the three pain points with digital enablement are:

(i) cost of living **(ii)** fear of fraud, and **(iii)** lack of motivation to learn.

“Essential Digital Skills in particular play a crucial role in tackling digital exclusion by providing people with the skills they need to participate in society, access vital services and stay connected.”

Foundation Level consists of the most fundamental tasks to set up an individual for success.

- c.44.7 million **(84%)** have the Foundation Level (vs. 80% in 2022)
- c.8.5 million **(16%)** do not have the Foundation Level as they are unable to complete all tasks (vs. 20% in 2022)
- c.1.3 million **(2%)** are **digitally disengaged** (can do 0 foundation level tasks) (vs. 4% in 2022)

Essential Digital Skills for Life are the digital skills needed to thrive in a digital society.

- c.48.8 million **(92%)** have Essential Digital Skills for Life (vs. 88% in 2022)
- c.4.4 million **(8%)** lack the Essential Digital Skills needed for everyday life (vs. 12% in 2022)
- c.1.5 million **(3%)** cannot do any of the Essential Digital Skills tasks (vs. 5% in 2022)

Essential Digital Skills for Work are the digital skills that are needed in the workplace.

- c.33.2 million **(82%)** have Essential Digital Skills for Work (vs. 78% in 2022)
- c.7.5million **(18%)** lack the Essential Digital Skills needed for the workplace (vs. 22% in 2022)
- c.1.9 million **(5%)** cannot do any of the Essential Digital Skills for Work tasks (vs. 8% in 2022)

Improvement priority 4: Employment, volunteering and training (please see the [full report](#))

CLD in Highland will provide; visible, easy to access opportunities which support routes into Employment, volunteering and training for those who need it most.

CLD in practice – spotlight on Employability, volunteering and training

New Start Highland

[New Start Highland](#) is an award winning third sector organisation which tackles homelessness, poverty, and long-term unemployment in the Highlands. They help people to gain employability skills and confidence, including work qualifications and hands-on experience to gain SQA and City and Guilds qualifications, also providing personalised support to help people to find a job. They are an Accreditation Centre for SQA accreditation in Life Skills and ITC, Basic Numeracy, Certificate of Work Readiness (CWR) and Certificate in Work Skills up to Level 5. Tutoring takes the form of on-the-job training with students only in the class for a short while to learn life skills. Depute Chief Executive Mairi Macaulay said that “sometimes people don’t realise they are learning as they are out and about doing things.” Their Mentoring Tutor, Carol, is an assessor based in the ‘Job Club’ and feels it is important to focus on self-analysis of her own practice. She said, “learners get a confidence boost from the work they do with us”, where volunteer placements often transition into supported paid placements for people with learning disabilities.

New Start Highland is a Multiply partner and runs courses in their workshops helping students learn measuring for upholstery materials, pricing and costing a project. Mairi went on to say, “the courses are about having something creative to use around numbers.” In the Warehouse the [Community RePaint scheme](#) has been adopted to sell leftover trade paint with full tins of paint selling for £2 per litre. Each year an estimated 50 million litres out of the 320 million litres of paint sold in the UK goes to waste. This leftover paint is either thrown away or stored in homes or garages despite over 50% of it still being usable.



Employability courses include *Cooking on a Budget* which is delivered at the Welfare Hub at Cameron Barracks and the Inverness Foodstuff chef also provides tuition at Smithton Primary. The cooking classes are run in partnership with HLH and NHS at Hilton Community Centre where students receive a free slow cooker and a recipe book to help them cook simple nutritious food. Their Inverness-based *Food Hub* supplies many community groups across Highland with vital food supplies, for local distribution and there is a logistics team and a training café where staff work with groups to make food items available to those who need it most. People are supported to make healthy, delicious food choices while the cookery coach provides training to help families eat well on a budget and know the best foods to buy.

ENABLE Works and New Start Highland - From volunteering to employment: Jack's Story

Jack began his journey with Enable in January 2021 at age 24 and successfully transitioned into employment with New Start Highland by December. Initially hired as a Warehouse Assistant, Jack has since progressed to the role of Training Administration Assistant, a position he thoroughly enjoys. Throughout his time with Enable, Jack actively participated in various online workshops Enable Works ran to enhance his skills and to help with moving into employment. Before securing employment at New Start, Jack engaged in volunteering as a *Meeter and Greeter* at the Muir Hub in Muir of Ord. The intention behind his volunteering was to gain experience in different areas within the Hub, eventually leading to his successful transition into employment after a period volunteering. Jack's story is a testament to value of volunteering as a stepping stone to meaningful employment. He said, “the support given to me from Enable has been really helpful.” At a recent visit to New Start Highland, the former community development manager at the Muir Hub and now the CLDSO, was delighted to meet up with Jack after 2 years. He had gained confidence and skills working at New Start Highland and was happy engaging with his colleagues and volunteers.



<p>1. Increased access to volunteering in communities</p>	<p>Highland Third Sector Interface The Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) has developed a new website and app called Aye Volunteer. It has 2 main sections which can match people who are looking for volunteering opportunities with organisations that are promoting volunteering opportunities e.g. Partnerships for Wellbeing are currently looking for a volunteer driver, walk leader, photographer, and minibus assistant, while Connecting Young Carers are looking for an enthusiastic Active Volunteers for Alness and Inverness, as well as a support volunteer for the Dingwall Unpaid Carers Group. Opportunities are also provided to sign up to the Saltire Awards to gain certificates for volunteering as a great way to celebrate the achievements of young people aged between 12 – 25.</p> <p>GROW Project at Botanic Gardens, Inverness At the Botanic Gardens in Inverness over half of the garden area is lovingly looked after by the GROW Project volunteers. Gardening opportunities are provided for adults with a learning disability to care for a beautiful, productive, and wildlife-friendly garden which is open to the public. The Grow Project builds personal confidence, physical health, independence, and wellbeing amongst participants and promotes horticultural happiness and social inclusion for the 30 ASN Grow Gardeners and more than 35 active volunteers. Free apple pressing sessions have been run for the public every weekend in September and October with more than 1,000 litres of freshly pressed local apples juiced. Here is a picture of one of the Grow Gardeners enjoying making fresh apple juice.</p>  <p>Celebrating the achievements of volunteers and community groups The people of Muir of Ord came together in 2022 to celebrate the achievements of volunteers, community groups and businesses at the Muir of Ord Village Celebration and Awards Ceremony. They were Hailed as local heroes in the Ross-Shire Journal for their dedicated roles to make happier lives for people in the community.</p>	
<p>2. Improve partnership working to strengthen the role and contribution of CLD partners in closing the attainment gap.</p>	<p>In 2022/23 The Challenge Fund has seen 12 organisations provide innovative adult numeracy training across Highland sharing a total allocation of £460,115 to deliver the programme up to December 2023 that will improve access to employability, pre-employability support, specialist support and targeted employment support.</p> <p>The range of courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses for parents wanting to increase numeracy skills. • Courses for prisoners, those recently released or on temporary licence. • Courses aimed at encouraging people to upskill to access jobs/careers. • Innovative programmes delivered with employers. • Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage money. • Provision developed in partnership with community organisations. <div style="text-align: right;">  <p>Funded by UK Government</p>  </div>	

The 2022/23 Multiply beneficiary partners include:

- Lead Scotland Numeracy & Employability Skills Project
- Everybody Counts led by Workers' Educational Association (WEA)
- Next Steps – Highlands, led by Enable Scotland
- Hope Counts led by Lochaber Hope
- Skills for Life led by New Start Highland
- Barnardo's Works Multiply
- Number Booster led by Ben Wyvis Primary School Parent Partnership
- UHI Inverness Multiply
- North Multiply led by UHI North Highland
- Counting Matters led by Calman Trust
- Highland Festival of Maths: Family Numeracy led by High Life Highland
- Multiply West led by UHI West Highland



WEA Highland Multiply offers workplace and community learning opportunities. Their programme offers a hybrid approach using face-to-face and online courses. This enables flexible delivery times and venues for adults aged 19+ who do not have maths qualifications equivalent to National 5. They are an SQA Centre and can accredit learning at levels 3 and 4. WEA Multiply courses include, Excel for Employment, Take the stress out of number homework, Identify maths anxiety and an online course to help you manage your money. WEA also provide non-accredited courses which run for 8 weeks and participants receive badges for entry level, First Steps and Higher. Some of the courses include: Beat the Cost-of-Living Crisis, Getting a Good Deal, Crafty Calculations, Cooking on a Budget, Introduction to Working as Pupil Support Staff, ICT and Employability Skills and Supporting Children's Numeracy.

In Dingwall, **Ukrainian adult and family learners** are invited to come along to a taster session in Sheila's Community Café to play games and have coffee and cake. In Caithness, participants are invited to come along to the Wick Hotel for a friendly chat at the coffee mornings where they can learn some new skills.

High Life Highland Festival of Maths

HLH Festival of Maths focuses on family learning projects that reduce maths anxiety for parents, helping to boost parents' confidence to support their children with homework. There is a range of learning activities for families to learn together and feel positive about numeracy for everyday life. During the summer months family play-based numeracy sessions were run at Raigmore Community Centre in Inverness. They have been designed in such a way that numeracy is engaging and enjoyable for the whole family. The play-based sessions created fun educational activities that include:- Creative outdoor games, numeracy in nature, arts and crafts, baking adventures, water play and exciting maths challenges. HLH works in partnership with WEA. WEA will make referrals to the HLH adult



learning coordinators for people with literacy needs as their employability funding criteria is aimed at short, sharp employability interventions.

UHI Multiply Courses

UHI delivers three Multiply courses that are designed to be informal and fun and can be adjusted to best suit what learners want to know. There are no exams and at the end of every session participants receive a college certificate:

1. Build Your Confidence with Numbers
 - This course aims to empower a learner to use numbers for everyday calculations enabling them to:
Quickly calculate the change they will get from a purchase, Calculate ratios to convert a recipe for 2 into a recipe for 4, Work out how much material, or how many bricks are needed for a home project, Convert from pounds to kilogrammes or other unit conversions and estimate how likely someone is to win a local lottery
2. Parents: Boost your confidence with numbers
3. Use Numeracy to Help Manage Money



Barnardo's Works Highland Multiply

Barnardo's Works Highland delivers a range of employability support for young people aged between 15-29 years who require support to gain engagement into a positive, sustainable destination. They provide construction training with group-based programmes delivering employability skills, employer talks and site visits for roofing and practical work to prepare for CSCS. They also work with APEX on a group-based project. Barnardo's primary demographic is 16–19-year-old, so it is a challenge to attract the 19+ age range for Multiply which is not reflective of their learning landscape. Experience of promoting the programmes as 'maths' or 'numeracy' based does not appeal to their learners, some of whom have their own tenancies, so they are focusing on embedding practical budgeting skills for the guys to think about how they are spending £100 per week on lunch etc.

ENABLE Works

Enable Works offers their *Supported Employment Service* in Caithness, Sutherland, Lochaber and surrounding areas, Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross. The Highland Council Employability Service includes partners: Mikeysline, New Start Highland, Highland Hospice, HTSI, Pulteneytown People's Project, DYW West Highland, Developing the Young Workforce North Highland, Apex Highland, SDS Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross, DYW West Highland, Highlife Highland, Caithness Chamber of Commerce Castletown Caithness Community, Connecting Carers, Lochaber Hope and Highland One Stop Shop - Service for Adults across Highland with autism.

High Life Highland Youth Work

The second strand of HLH Youth Work is about making life better for young people across Highland by supporting them to **Get On**, from informal learning routes and youth work, through to achievement and attainment. The *Get On* strand requires their involvement in *high quality youth work*, making sure *their voices are amplified and heard by decision makers* and providing *aspirational learning opportunities* aimed at those who stand to benefit the most. HLH youth work supports the following awards in 29 High school areas, in school and community settings: Youth Achievement Awards, Dynamic Youth Awards, Hi5 Awards, Saltire Awards, HLH Leadership Programme, John Muir Award, SQA awards and Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Highlights from the [HLH Youth Work Annual report 2023](#) are as follows:

- In 2023, HLH Youth Work has seen a **72% increase in achievement awards gained by young people** and supporting work to close the attainment gap.
- HLH youth workers continually demonstrate that **equality of opportunity is an essential** part of their planning and delivery. High quality relationship building is at the heart of everything that HLH youth workers do with young people.
- **> 85% of young people** said their experience with HLH youth workers was **excellent or very good**.



157,957 hours of learning provided



79,841 meaningful engagements made



1,513 achievement awards gained



7,558 programmed activities delivered

The *Choose to Lead* (Level 4 & 5) SCQF Rated Level 4 Programme, delivered in partnership with UHI Inverness, is an Award-winning Leadership Programme for young people aged 12-25 years, offering quality training opportunities and courses from Scottish Governing Bodies for sport, Youth Work and trusted partners. HLH’s own SCQF accredited “Choose To Lead” Level 4 award Leadership Programme is underpinned by leadership in sport and youth work, although the awards can be utilised by young people volunteering in clubs, facilities, and schools. All members of the programme are encouraged to sign up for national Saltire Awards to formally recognise the commitment and contribution of youth volunteering.

Choose to Lead: HLH Leadership Programme in the 2022/23 academic year:

5, 583 Young leaders through the programme 2022/23	768 young people registered in 2022/23
19,500 volunteer hours of leadership in 2022/23	628 Hoodies awarded in 2022/23
8 Gold Hoodies awarded for 500 hours of Leadership	61 Green Hoodies
42 Silver Hoodies	113 Purple Hoodies
14 Red Hoodies	390 Navy hoodies and 61 t-shirts
Choose to Lead Awards in 2022/23 Level 4: 55 young people, with 19 passed & 36 ongoing Level 5: 17 young people, with 6 passed & 11 ongoing	New for Spring 2024 Platinum Hoodie for 750 hours Gaelic leadership training

[Inverness Caley Thistle](#) are committed to supporting the HLH leadership programme which could see deployment of young leaders out in community projects while their young ICT players could build their leadership skills through the programme’s partnership with Scottish FA to develop coaching abilities.

HLH's Testing for Change initiative aims to try something innovative around youth participation i.e. empowering young people to have a stronger and meaningful voice in aspects of service delivery. 7 groups of young people from across Highland took responsibility for deciding how to award funds to local youth groups and individuals. Over 25 grants were given out ranging from £130 to £1,500 (total £25,154.35). The innovative part was that the young decision makers were remunerated for their work ranging from vouchers, group trips and activities (totalling £2,580).



At Fortrose Academy (FA), Wellbeing Wednesdays are all about students and staff focusing on their mental wellbeing by doing something that makes them feel good about themselves or connecting with others. It's an ideal opportunity to recognise the achievements of young people who have successfully achieved their HLH Choose to Lead Level 4 Award in partnership with UHI Inverness by supporting intergenerational sessions. The S6 pupils have developed a youth enterprise project [Reconnect FA](#) aimed at connecting generations to share memories of local landmarks with a colouring and activities book (please see the [video](#)).

My Future My Success

[My Future My Success programme](#) works with partners and families to bring a bespoke offer to a young person who is not attending school, helping them to develop skills for life, work and learning. It aims to strengthen support for young people and upskilling mentors; develop pathways to apprenticeships for the most vulnerable school leavers; expand training, skills and learning opportunities through partnerships; support for social enterprise and the third sector; and work placement programme linking to the public sector. The MFMS programme takes a partnership approach to supporting young people.

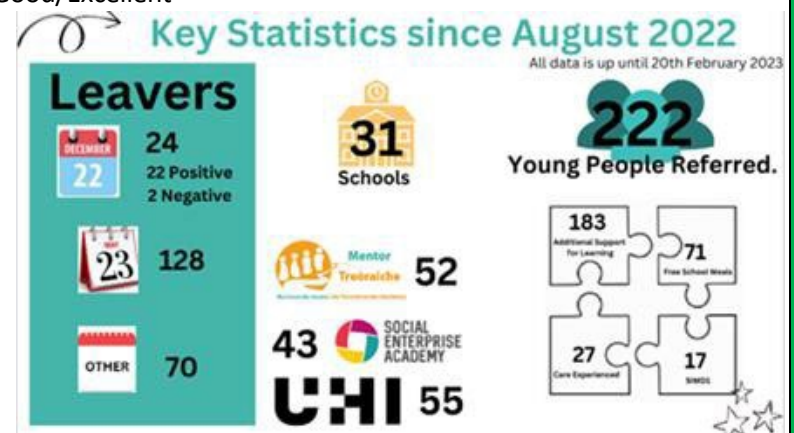
An update at the Highland Council Education Committee confirmed that, as of 25th May 2023, the MFMS programme had 361 referrals for young people across 31 schools. Feedback from schools on the programme has reported encouraging and positive results:

- 94% of young people engaging with MFMS felt more positive about their future.
- 88% thought the support from the development officer was Good/Excellent
- 76% rated the impact on young people as Good/Excellent

School pupils work towards the national certificate of employability and citizenship SCQF level 3 as highlighted in the infographic.

- 13 pupils are working towards the full National Certificate Course Employability & Citizenship SCQF level 3.
- 10 pupils are achieving the digital literacy full 11-unit National Certificate
- 15 pupils are achieving personal development.
- All the materials are on Google Classroom

Feedback from the Mentors said that 96% thought the training met their expectations. One Mentor said, "The ability to put a young person first is the only qualification you need to become a mentor."



SEA development workers ask young people the question, "What is it you would like to change in the world?" and then teach them about People / Planet / Profit and how to do market research.

Social Enterprise Schools

[Social Enterprise Academy](#) (SEA) works in partnership with MFMS and a team of social entrepreneurs to deliver *Social Enterprise Schools*. The pupil-led programme provides best practice entrepreneurship education through experiential learning for young people, helping them to step up and lead in a safe space by supporting them with tools to set up a social enterprise. Some children have experience of hard issues in life including trauma and are care experienced.



One young group had an idea to **teach older people digital skills** to do online banking so they didn't have to go to the bank, but their grandparents said they liked going to the bank as that's where they would meet people. This taught the young people about identifying a need first and it is not just something they want to do, or think is a good idea. It is a valuable life lesson in failure and helps them to look at the link between social issues and preparing a viable business proposition.

Several girls based their ideas around **tackling domestic abuse and bullying in schools**. Some had lived experience of domestic abuse and didn't want to see people being bullied or diminished, so they set up a peer-to-peer anti-bullying line. They took part in the Social Enterprise Schools Dragon's Den where they pitched their social business to the Dragons, made up of Social Entrepreneurs and sponsors. Another young group made bird boxes which they sold to raise money to make 3 friendship benches with a QR code for the anti-bullying line. The benches were made with the support of older men at the local Men's Shed who had the skills and experience to help them with the collaborative intergenerational project.



There is also an online **Dragon's Den for all Gaelic Medium Education schools** with a chance for changemakers from GME aged 3-18 to pitch their social enterprise idea and win up to £150 seed funding.

High Life Highland SQA Approved Assessor Centre

HLH is an SQA Assessor Centre aimed at enabling adults across the Highlands to take part in learning that will help them develop their skills and confidence, meet new people, and make positive changes in their life. Currently HLH has 26 Awards available to staff, [adult](#) and youth learners. Popular courses include the Personal Finance and Mental Health & wellbeing Award, with the new NPA Theory & Practice in Youth Work being rolled out in 2024.

Caithness Voluntary Group

Caithness Voluntary Group (CVG) is an excellent example of HTSI's local delivery group in Caithness. In 2023, the CVG team provided a *Community Training Programme* as posted on their [Facebook](#) page.

1st Thurso Boys' Brigade

1st Thurso Boys' Brigade moto is *The Boys' Brigade: Faith in Young People*. They are an active group of young volunteers in the Thurso community regularly seen out on their monthly litter picks and organising various different events for young people to engage in the community.



3. Coordinate targeted (Adult) Learning opportunities, across Partners, which enable people to develop their core skills and increase employability

Hi-Hope

[Hi-hope](#) is an online resource giving lots of information on what's out there for young people leaving school in the Highlands. It signposts to the latest job opportunities, training courses, apprenticeships, volunteering opportunities, employer information and events. The online directory of organisations includes Change Mental Health, Youth Highland, Enable Works, Lead Scotland, Day1 Mentoring, Lochaber Hope Personal Development Programme, Key Fort William, The Buzz Project, Inclusion Scotland, Developing the Young Workforce Inverness & Central Highland, HLH Adult Learning, Alness CAB, SUDS Highland CiC1 and Autism Initiatives – Highland One Stop Shop, Fèis Rois and Skills Development Scotland.

High Life Highland

The HLH [Adult Learning Annual Report 2023](#) showcases the level of increased skills and confidence relating to employment, volunteering and training learning opportunities.

- 12 learners completed SQA Core Skills or SQA Employability Awards in the 2022/23 year.
- 33,144 hours of learning have been provided.
- Learners are from 34 different nationalities.
- HLH Offers 24 SQA Awards (increased to 26).
- 98% of learners report improved levels of confidence and satisfaction.

My World of Work

[My World of Work](#) contains up-to-date information and advice to help young people make the best decisions for their future. 'My World of Work Job Search' can be accessed through an icon on the desktop of library computers with a useful 'My Career Toolkit', step-by-step CV builder, job, and training opportunities. The CLD Standards Council has noted that there are 173 different job titles for CLD worker which are often described by funders such as 'Worker Multiply' or 'Worker Levelling Up'. [Community Learning and Development job opportunities](#) are listed under the category for 'Care' or 'Nursing' and this may not be the obvious route for a young person to search if they are interested in youth work, adult learning or community development. [My World of Work Facebook](#)

Highland Employability Forum

The [Highland Employability Forum \(HEP\)](#) is a multi-agency approach to ensure that partners work collaboratively to deliver employability services across the Highland Council area. It has produced a [3-year Delivery Plan](#) which presents a strategic outline of the proposed employability priorities in Highland from April 2022 to March 2025. Along with 3 Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) in North Highland, West Highland and the Inner Moray Firth, the HEP delivers on No One Left Behind (NOLB) which aims to change the employability system in Scotland to make it more adaptable, responsive and person-centred.

Highland Council Employability Service

Highland Council Employability Service on behalf of the HEP, has launched 2 challenge funds in December 2022 designed to help people living in the Highlands who could benefit from employability support services:

- The **Community Engagement Challenge Fund** is targeted at Highland based community organisations who can apply for a grant of up to £10,000 to help engage with and identify people living locally who would benefit from employability support.

“The HERO scheme has helped me with funding support which has enabled me to start my apprenticeship in Business and Administration. As Pure Lubrication is a small company, without the HERO scheme I may not be where I am today. It allows me to continue to learn and develop, and gain a qualification, it also helps Pure Lubrication with their own business development.”
Codie Cargill

- The **Innovation Challenge Fund** is open to public and third sector organisations operating in the Highlands to apply for funds of up to £50,000 to develop innovative approaches to support people experiencing challenges which prevent them from progressing towards and within employment.
- The **Rural Community Engagement Fund** was launched in Sep-23 to support the NOLB programme with the aim of helping third sector organisations based and working in rural Highland communities to engage with, and support people who would benefit from extra help to secure employment, or to help those already in work to progress. Funding applications were from £2,500 to £10,000 to provide employability support for families most at risk from poverty.



The **Highland Employment Recruitment Offer (HERO)** grant scheme is funded by The Highland Council and the Scottish Government under the NOLB and Young Person's Guarantee Funding Streams with £1m over financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 to support businesses to create new jobs for unemployed adults. The [HERO](#) scheme helps people of all work ages and with the greatest barriers to employment secure and stay in jobs. In 2022, the [HERO scheme supported Codie Cargill](#) to undertake a modern apprenticeship in Business and Administration with Inverness based company **Pure Lubrication**. Highland-based **virtual assistant company Behind the Scenes VA** Ltd also reaped the benefits of the HERO scheme by recruiting two skilled members of bookkeeping/admin staff. [Behind the Scenes VA](#) was set up in 2018 to provide a quality and affordable support service to start ups, small businesses and the self-employed. Though geographically based in Inverness, harnessing 21st century technology has enabled the company to build a list of clients across the globe.

The Highland Council Employability Service is offering support for low-income parents to progress within their employment through funded accredited training, SVQ and industry recognised qualifications to increase earning potential and improve household income. Some parents struggle to fit their work around childcare provision or the time/availability of local public transport. The Highland Council can provide support for parents in these circumstances or help with finding work.

Third Sector Employability Forum

HTSI also has a vibrant Third Sector Employability Forum for anyone who is involved in, or has an interest in, Employability services. Recent engagement from the Mentor Services Manager at MCR Pathways, shared knowledge and experiences on identifying ways to apply mentoring principles as part of an overall learning and developing strategy. Skills Development Scotland shared information about support available for SME's and Enable Scotland (Highland Services) discussed the new Highland Council service. HTSI Third Sector Employability team has expressed an interest in meeting with HMIe at the upcoming progress visit.

Case study: The Friends of Brora Community Learning Centre

The Friends of Brora Community Learning Centre (FOBCLC) is a constituted community group that looks after a small social enterprise based at Brora Learning Zone. The social enterprise supports adults and young people who have barriers to learning and employment. It provides a safe space for those who are unemployed, experience social isolation and live in a rural locality. FOBCLC was originally set up as a stepping-stone for service users from New Futures Sutherland, The Gatehouse Mental Health Project and

“Now, I am in the first year of a 4-year degree in Creative Writing. I honestly never thought that I would ever be doing anything like this in my 40’s, but I encourage anybody who thinks that maybe they are too old to learn that that is nonsense! You can achieve anything with the right people guiding you and that is the support that the High Life Highland provides.”

Activity Agreement students and other local support agencies to help integrate people back into the community or to help build employability skills by supporting adults and young people who have barriers to learning and employment.

It was felt that the gap from recovery to employment and training or from agency support to independence in the community was sometimes too big for people to manage and the project helped people to continue to develop and flourish. The project helps support adults and young people with a range of different challenges including autism, anxiety, depression or more long-term mental health difficulties, isolation and loneliness, or low confidence and self-esteem by helping to explore creative expression and to develop confidence and skills in craft making. It provides a safe space for participants to design and produce quality crafts whilst gaining employability skills, work experience and most importantly having opportunities to socialise by being part of a team.

Melanie’s life changing experience

Being able to do a computer course at the Brora Learning Zone has changed Melanie’s life after she started learning again in her 40’s. Before doing the course, Melanie had virtually no experience in computers and was a self-confessed technophobe, but since the very start she had two patient and kind teachers who helped her grow in confidence with every session. Their gentle prompting encouraged her to apply for a Higher English course at Inverness College, where she achieved an ‘A’. Melanie says:

Brora Gallery Social Enterprise Project

The [Brora Gallery Social Enterprise Group](#) has been running since 2012 through the FOBCLC but started with the idea approximately six years before running mini-enterprise programmes at the Learning Zone to test out the ideas. The social enterprise makes one off or limited-edition items for sale, many of them are from recycled/upcycled materials. The main aim of the project is to help people build enterprise skills, confidence, and self-esteem. With support from the Highland Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, Brora Gallery has expanded to be able to fully support people with diagnosed mental illness and those with a long-term health condition or disability. The social enterprise group is facilitated by two HLH Adult Learning tutor leaders, along with visiting artists who deliver a variety of workshops including printmaking, mosaic, batik and silk painting, jewellery making as well as woodworking skills.



Lead Scotland Adult Achievement Awards

The Adult Achievement Award gives credit to adults for their learning in the community, home, college, volunteering, prison, leisure interests and the workplace. The person-centred awards are flexible and offered at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 6 where the learner gains accreditation from current and prior informal and non-formal learning, creating a bridge to onward progression. For some people it is their first qualification which enables them to build confidence through learning digital skills and returning to the workplace after a long period away. Here is a [Video](#) of a LEAD Scotland learner.

4. Develop and promote a learning

HLH learning pathways project updates are available.
A partnership is in place with Lead Scotland to progress pathways through the Highland Adult Learning Development Group (HALDG)

pathway initiative to improve adult learning progression

See the [full details](#) of the HLH Adult Learning Pathway from the CLD case study reporting form August 2023

A young Syrian woman in her early twenties, named Aman, needed support and an individual Learning Plan (ILP) to address her social isolation and integration issues as she did not settle into the school community and felt alienated. She completed SQA ESOL and other units on a 1-2-1 basis with EAL teacher and left secondary education.

The **Syrian Individual Learning Plan - *Sharing Arabic Cultural Heritage: from social isolation to community participation and empowerment*** - was designed to engage Aman in activities where she would share her cultural heritage with her host community. The intended outcome was to empower and convince her that her culture and identity matter, are valued and can inspire others. HLH Adult Individual Learning Plan Flowchart is mapped to the right:



It has been identified that Aman is passionate about Islamic Calligraphy and is committed to a daily self-directed learning and practice of five Islamic calligraphy fonts. Aman applied to Moniack Mhor for specialist Arabic calligraphy tools and resources worth £500. Her next empowering project is leading a Calligraphy Club for Women of all ages to share her skills, inspire, and work with others. Once Aman gains confidence through her engagement in the Museum and leading the Calligraphy Club, the final stage would be to encourage her to share her skills at local schools. This would hopefully help her recover from the experience she had at school as a pupil.

CALA Employability Programme

With the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) funding to 1,140 hours a year per child, it is estimated that up to 11,000 additional staff will be required in the sector to fill posts at ELC centres, out of school clubs, breakfast clubs, playgroups, and holiday clubs. There are also opportunities to start a childminding business to look after children in your own home. CALA's employability project *#Openingdoors* has been running for over 4 years and covers Inverness and the Inner Moray firth area, Nairnshire, Sutherland, and Easter Ross. It provides mentoring and guidance to young people aged 16-24 years who are interested in a career in childcare. By providing individualised support, along with peer support and work experience, *#Openingdoors* aims to enable young people to move into, or stay within, employment alongside enhancing their job opportunities within the childcare workforce. Adults over the age of 25 who are perhaps changing career or returning to work following a break can also receive mentoring and guidance to gain confidence, experience and skills in Early Learning and Childcare which can be recorded in their Personal Portfolio.

5. Increase and formalise partnership working between Education and CLD to support

The My Future My Success Programme

The MFMS programme takes a partnership approach to supporting young people. The main partners include The Highland Council, High Life Highland, UHI, Social Enterprise Academy and NHS Highland. Details are included in the [My Future My Success Interim Report April 2023](#)



learning and development which contributes to closing the attainment gap

“The award itself was so well received by the children that many of them wrote about their experiences of their time planting, growing and participating in their Hi5 awards as their favourite time of the week.”
Rachel Chalmers
YDO

Gaelic Inclusion In-ghabhail Ghàidhlig

Am Baile, is a bi-lingual cultural heritage website managed by the HLH Highland Archive Service. It has seen increasing customer engagement with 147,258 visits to Am Baile website in 2022/23. HLH libraries has a Gaelic book collection and delivers Gaelic Bookbug for children aged 0-4 age with rhyme, song and storytelling sessions delivered with parents/carers. The Gaelic Bookbug sessions take place once a month in Dingwall, Fort William, Plockton in co-ordination with the Gaelic Nursery, by request in Tain and in Ullapool. Gaelic Sports Leadership Courses are available to young people and resources available for primary school leadership training.

Gaelic Youth Work in Fort William

Youth Development Officer (YDO) Rachel Chalmers led a pilot programme with Fort William’s Gaelic primary school Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar (BSGLA). In the autumn, a Gaelic Hi 5 Award was undertaken with a class of 22 pupils focused on their ‘Growing and Planting’ project in their new Polytunnel. To gain a Hi5 Award, young people must choose a challenge, complete a minimum number of hours, think about and comment on their achievements, record time spent and gather evidence of their participation. They then receive an official certificate from Youth Scotland and gain SCQF credit points. This is first for High Life Highland with 22 entirely Gaelic Awards.



High Life Highland Youth Work Services and Charleston Academy case study reporting Aug-23

Need for the project: Reducing social and educational inequalities using youth work interventions with a clear focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. Over 50% of young people attending Charleston Academy are registered as having additional support needs. Working with those most vulnerable, HLH staff delivered SCQF accredited awards. Additional support was provided by school staff offering a safe space for the young person to wait for the bus and for them to go to in-between classes. HLH staff provided moral support, check-in calls and weekly in-person sessions at the school to increase learning opportunities. Discussions with parents and young person helped to reassure them that if further issues arose, they had support to deal with them. Weekly learning sessions continued for two terms and work done provided portfolio evidence. After several months, the young person was also supported to send in a college application.

Outcomes/Impact (difference made): Young person gained confidence and a voice. They gained additional knowledge and vocational skills and increased social and soft skills. Parents were able to address concerns with the school and felt heard and listened to. The school was able to facilitate a young person’s needs being met so they could return to school. The sibling returned to school full time.

Evidence (how do we know?): The young person returned to school for a further two terms. During this time, they gained multiple SCQF/SQA core skill and employability qualifications. On leaving school they gained employment. The parent has commented to multiple other people how much of a difference the activity made.

Lessons learned (reflection): Feeling heard and supported can change the trajectory of lives.

Improvement priority 5: Community Development & Resilience (please see the [full report](#))

CLD in Highland will prioritise targeted support to the development of capacity in key areas and of groups to increase their resilience for the future. This priority will build on the experiences and outcomes of Highland communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

CLD in practice – spotlight on Community Development & Resilience

The Sutherland Community Planning Partnership

An outstanding example of a Community Planning Partnership which is working well together is seen in Sutherland. The CLD Lead for both Caithness and Sutherland areas is Head of Strengthening Communities (Caithness and Sutherland), Angela Simpson from Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

CLD Case Study Reporting Form - [Sutherland Community Planning Partnership](#)

Need for the project/activity: Sutherland has a population of just over 13,000. Over the last 20 years there has been a 38% increase in the 65+ age group and a decreasing birth rate. Sutherland needs to attract and retain younger people and families to the area to be sustainable. One of the challenges faced by people hoping to live here is a lack of affordable accommodation. The Sutherland Community Partnership Sub-Group 'Homes for People and Infrastructure' has brought together many of the communities that are interested in developing community owned properties in the future.

Description (what and how?):

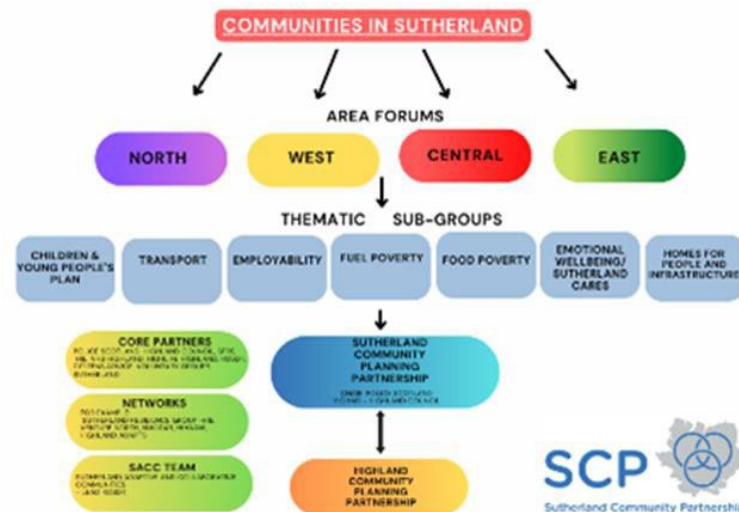
The SCP 'Homes' Group applied for funding and then coordinated a tour of properties, built with support from the Communities Housing Trust, across Wester Ross. Members of communities from across Sutherland attended the tour. Communities Housing Trust (CHT) provided information about builds they had completed in several communities as we passed through on the tour. The tour ended in Gairloch at the GALE Centre. Over lunch the group had the opportunity to talk with members of the Gairloch and Loch Ewe Action Forum and the Gairloch Museum to discuss the shared issues of living in a remote and rural area, and how we can best succeed at making our communities prosper. In the afternoon we had presentations from the Museum and CHT to expand on the learning of the morning.

Outcomes/Impact (difference made):

Communities established better links with each other. This means communities are better able to support each other to build resilience. The Communities Housing Trust gave examples of the support they could give to communities to build their own properties and attendees felt better able to envision what would suit their area. Attendees can now share this learning with others in their community and can begin to firm up plans for building the population of their locality.

Evidence (how do we know?):

A questionnaire was sent around the applicants. Feedback was also given on the day and by email after the event. Hopefully the outing will lead to future collaboration between community groups and the Community Housing Trust. Attendees found the time for more relaxed conversation beneficial. At a future learning exchange, a more relaxed itinerary would allow for greater freedom to explore other areas of interest.



“Hopefully it will inspire future developments in the rural communities of Sutherland.”

Actions	Measures / evaluation	BRAG
<p>1. Share learning - CPs which have adopted a resilience approach to planning to share learning and experiences with other CPs</p> <div data-bbox="107 751 374 1241" style="background-color: #4a90e2; color: white; padding: 10px; border-radius: 15px; width: fit-content; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>“We believe that young people should be supported to identify and lead positive change to bring about best outcomes in their lives and communities.” Clair Nichols Youth Highland</p> </div>	<p>Sutherland Community Planning</p> <p>Community Transport</p> <p>The Sutherland Community Partnership is proactive in promoting information and advice to residents and businesses such as the current transport services across Sutherland including Bradbury Dial-A-Bus service to Lairg, Rosehall and Ardgay and Community Transport services based at Helmsdale, Brora, Dornoch, Golspie, North West and Assynt.</p> <p>Focus North</p> <p>Focus North is a partnership of public, private and third sector organisations and community groups that is committed to driving opportunities that shape the future of Caithness and Sutherland. The vibrant and active partnership promotes apprenticeships, training and jobs in the energy, tourism, aerospace, environmental, STEM, public and third sector. The Focus North Conference Driving Opportunities that Shape Our Future was live streamlined in February 2023 from UHI Thurso and highlighted the Focus North Strategic Operational Policy 2023 – 2026 focusing on Economic Growth, People/Communities, Partnership Effectiveness and Sustainability (see 53mins into the video).</p> <p>Defibrillator training</p> <p>Brora Development Trust is working with local partners to organise a series of defibrillator training sessions delivered by St John Scotland over a few months with the first sessions taking place from Sep-23. The training is delivered by highly experienced and qualified St John Scotland trainers and comes at no cost to participants.</p> <p>Brora Youth Partnership</p> <p>In July 2023, Brora Development Trust (BDT) held a meeting of the Brora Youth Partnership to discuss how the community can make improvements to services and provisions for young people in Brora. The meeting came from the results of a community questionnaire survey, which found that current services and provisions for young people in Brora was one of the top improvements. Local volunteers and activities providers for children and young people, including the Primary School Head Teacher, High School reps, Primary PTA and Sutherland Young Carers (TYKES) attended. The meeting was co-facilitated by BDT and Youth Highland who are working closely with the Trust to advise and support on how to take forward a youth programme. The participants agreed to form a sub-committee of BDT, to steer a youth programme and a dedicated youth worker to organise and deliver youth activities needed in Brora. From February 2024, the Scottish Government and Highland Council will fund a pilot project to provide employment training to young people in East Sutherland. Golspie Youth Action Project will team up with Brora Youth Club to deliver <i>Aim High</i> - a programme to help young adults aged 16 - 19 to prepare for their first steps into employment. The 14-week course aims to support young people who have left school to practice important life skills and gain help finding positive future employment pathways. From week six, young people will be able to participate in a work placement and gain valuable work experience.</p>	

Education Aid

[Education Aid](#) is a small group of volunteers in Brora who fill bags and shoe boxes for the Blythwood Shoe Box Appeal. They work throughout the year to make up deliveries to be sent to the Ukraine and Eastern Europe for Christmas. For the 2023 appeal, the volunteer sewers, wrappers, and donators made up dozens of sewing kits with scissors, needles, thread, and safety pins, all neatly stored in attractively decorated cases. Chalk boards for children were handmade from recycled materials and added to cases of colouring pencils. The volunteers from Education Aid along with volunteers from the local Brora Thrift Shop contributed self-funded donations to make up a total of 284 bags and boxes all wrapped and ready to go to Eastern Europe and the Ukraine. Two of the sewers worked all year round to create 192 handmade reusable sanitary towels to support teenage girls experiencing period poverty.



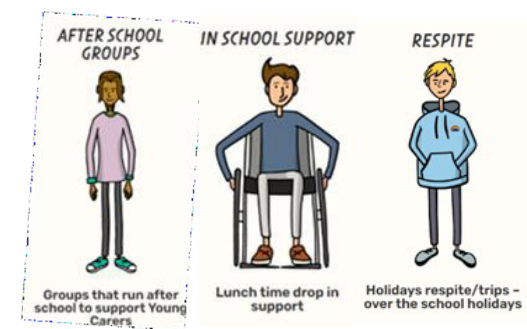
Caithness Community Planning Partnership

Caithness Poverty Action Group is a network of statutory, third sector and community organisations that pull together resources and knowledge around the cost-of-living concerns within Caithness to create a structure of support for the community. The weekly **Caithness Cares SWAY** e-newsletter is distributed to a wide network of organisations every Friday morning. The infographics below are recent examples of the suite of winter support available for Caithness Wide and Caithness East and West.

Employability training

To help people with free employability training, the Thurso Community Café provides a welcome venue for the Prepare to Advance programme of courses in partnership with Highland Council and SQA, including Basic cooking, food hygiene, customer service, team working, work experience, confidence building, personal development, health & safety, communication, first aid, SQA developing skills for employment.

Caithness KLICS (Kids Living In Caring Situations) One example of support is [Caithness KLICS](#) which was established in 2013 due to the demand for support for Young Carers in Caithness. A young carer is a young person who cares, unpaid, for a person who has any type of physical or mental illness, physical and/or mental disability, or misuses substances such as alcohol or drugs. A warm hub and support is available to families due to cost-of-living pressures for young carers and their families. Caithness KLICS is dedicated to supporting Young Carers from age 5-18 years old. Funding from RWE Bad á Cheò Wind Farm Community Fund helps support the team of 6 support workers in Wick and 2 in Thurso who make a difference in the lives of young carers by providing: After-school groups, In-school support, and Respite.



Mikeysline CEO
Emily Stokes “It
was a great evening
with wonderful

support and the
vendors have

pledged to donate
to Mikeysline from
their profits. We
are hugely grateful
to everyone at the
Victorian Market,
for all who
attended and
donated and for

the opportunity to
raise awareness of
the support we
provide.”

Highland Community Planning Partnership

[Mental health is put in the spotlight in Inverness](#)

On 8th September 2023, the Highland Community Planning Partnership organised an event at the Botanic Gardens in Inverness to shine a light on the support available for people in Highland to learn about mental health ahead of World Suicide Prevention Day. A wide range of HCPP organisations and partners from the third sector took part in the event to raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention, with hundreds of people attending throughout the day.



Emily Stokes and Allana Stables,
Mikeysline. Photo: Callum Mackay



Mark Fowler and Kerry Mackay, Scottish Fire

Staff from the [Discovery College](#) run by
Centred supported the event. The Discovery

and Rescue Service. Photo: Callum Mackay

College is the first of its kind in Highland and is dedicated to helping individuals gain a deeper understanding of wellbeing, mental health, and/or substance use. It offers a unique learning experience that provides individuals with the skills and knowledge to improve their overall quality of life, through empowering people to better manage and cope with life's challenges, allowing them to achieve personal growth and a sense of purpose. On the following day, a charity music gig, *Music for Malcolm*, was held at the Victorian Market to raise funds for Mikeysline.

Highland Community Planning Partnership

The overall vision for mental health improvement and suicide prevention in the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan is that: “People in Highland will benefit from good mental health and wellbeing.” The CPP Mental Health Delivery Group remobilised in 2022 when it was recognised that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was having long lasting implications on mental health and wellbeing. The call from communities, services and organisations was to improve mental health and wellbeing and prevent suicide across Highland.

HOIP Mental Health Delivery Group

A [series of 4 workshops](#) was organised by NHS Highland and delivered from October 2022 to June 2023.

1. The first Conversation Cafe style workshop delivered 4 key themes based on emerging evidence and needs assessment work.
2. The second workshop focussed on delivering suicide data and the national suicide prevention strategy.
3. The third workshop delivered on the outputs from the previous workshops and looked at the current structures to deliver mental health improvement and suicide prevention in Highland, with the whole system working and data driven planning.
4. The fourth workshop agreed to review and agree the priorities and actions developed in the review to support the HCPP to improve mental health and wellbeing and prevent suicide; Consider and agree a revised structure for delivering priorities and actions; Map priorities and actions to an agreed revised structure to support collaboration and reduce duplication of effort; and identify mechanisms/ways of working that would support a whole system efficient joined up approach.

The [draft revised plan](#) for delivery of mental health & suicide prevention priorities/actions was submitted to the HCPP in Sep-23

2. Support programme of community development and skills training

Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) provides excellent training for third sector organisations, community groups and community activists in a wide range of topics. With over 40 courses available on their e-Learning platform ranging in price from £30 for 1-3 licences to £240 for 40 licences, learners can choose from as many of the topics in the [course catalogue](#) during a year including: Workplace Development, Compliance, Finance, Communications, Wellbeing, Self-management and IT Skills. HTSI also provides training to third sector organisations and community groups on Engagement, Evaluation and Funding which helps them to gather evidence of need and impact, build community support and prepare evidence for funding applications.

HTSI training case study - [Dingwall Community Centre](#) is benefitting from Part 1 & 2 Governance training which involves an organisational health check to review all their policies, procedures, and processes. The HTSI development officer is also guiding Board members to navigate a new SCIO structure and helping to develop their skills as new Board members. The co-Chairperson is a librarian at Dingwall Library and commented how the training has helped to empower her with knowledge and skills which has improved her confidence since taking on the new role and provided the assurance that the community-led organisation is operating safely. HTSI has also run a series of one-hour Masterclasses in the past on topics such as: Avoiding top risks for new organisations, Roles and Responsibilities for Board Members and Forming a Charity. Their [Good Governance Toolkit](#) is available on the website along with recordings of the masterclasses.

The Volunteer Management training has also been recommended to the group of volunteers who run the Pop-Up Social Supermarket at [Dingwall Community Fridge](#) and provide a lifeline in their local community. The annual Winter Collection organised by the dedicated volunteers and Tesco Community Services team saw a visit from Kate Forbes MSP, Councillor Angela Maclean (who donated her time volunteering), Councillor Raymond Bremner (Highland Council Leader) and Jason Beeston from Fareshare who partner with Tesco to redistribute food to all around the UK.



Skills Network – Expanding Third sector skills and knowledge

HTSI has partnered with the Skills Network to offer an opportunity to explore new skills and learning opportunities. Dozens of fully funded courses are listed and available to apply as a great resource for personal and professional development. The learning opportunities are all nationally recognised qualifications and participants can complete up to 7 fully funded courses per year at a time that suits them. Currently they are promoting Level 2 Certificate in Awareness of Bullying in Children and Young People.

CALA e-Learning Zone

[Care and Learning Alliance \(CALA\)](#) is the largest third sector early learning and childcare organisation serving Highland and Moray. They are dedicated to 'getting it right for every child'. CALA courses are informative, interactive, and offer the chance to gain valuable knowledge in your own time. They are written by experts in childcare and carefully crafted to maximise opportunities for learning. Each course features a quiz, which helps consolidate learning. After passing the quiz participants are issued a certificate, acting as proof that the course has been completed. Each course undertaken counts towards CPD (if applicable).

Jacqui Douglas
CEO CALA "

Research shows that play for all ages can help support them to recover and bounce back and we will be out providing as many opportunities to play, be active and have fun indoors and outdoors as possible. After all, we all feel better when we play!"

Current courses include:

- [Introduction to the National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland 2021](#)
- [Gender Equal Play: breaking down stereotypes](#)
- [Understanding the Child's Plan](#)
- [Setting up a Gaelic Medium Toddler Group](#)
- [Literacy; Learning for Life](#)
- [Connecting Young Carers e-learning modules](#)

"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."
George Bernard Shaw

Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)

In 2023, CALA launched its 'Year of Play' to mark its 35th year of serving communities across the north with a series of events to celebrate children and quality play experiences including 35 pop-up play sessions, 35 play leaders/champs trained, 35 podcasts on play based themes, 35 new play resources with outdoor play, toddler sessions and puddle-jumping.

CALA works with partners and other key stakeholders to ensure the importance of play in supporting child development, curiosity and communication is highlighted and championed. They are partnering with HLH Inverness Museum and Art Gallery to celebrate 35 years of play by showcasing old toys that highlight the vital importance of play past, present and future.





CALA Play and Learn Together groups

CALA runs its own play and learn and pop-up play sessions in partnership with local community organisations. Outdoor playtime in Badenoch and Strathspey. The Play and Learn Group in Muir of Ord was one of the first to be started with funding from the Community Based Adult Learning Funds from HTSI in 2022 and has been a great success ever since with up to 25 families each week taking part in messy play, singing and Bookbug stories with parents, carers and children learning together. CALA family learning practitioners have supported the Play and Learn Together group since the onset and now run it as one of 6 CALA groups in Alness, Mercinch, Raigmore, Muir of Ord, Aviemore and Nairn.

Gaelic Toddler Groups

CALA and Bòrd na Gàidhlig are working in partnership with Highland Council, developing a vibrant Gaelic 0-3 early years sector across the Highlands. Four part-time Gaelic Toddler Development Workers support and promote Gaelic language learning and usage amongst the youngest children and their parents through quality play experiences at [Gaelic Toddler groups](#). Local and national guidance including '[Realising the Ambition: Being me](#)' and '[Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Early Years Toolkit](#)' are used at the groups. They encourage and provide support and information to parents who are considering bilingualism for their children through Gaelic Education. Here is a [list of 24 Na Buidhnean Gàidhlig/Gaelic groups](#) across Highland.

<p>Since 1998, Calman Trust has assisted over 6,000 young people (15-25) across the Highlands to improve their life prospects and avoid poverty by offering individualised support and training.</p>	<p>Calman Trust Calman Trust aims to enable young people aged 15-25 in the Highlands, who are at risk of being left behind because of their personal challenges, to become confident and capable young adults. They improve life chances for young people who are prepared to manage independent living or a job and to join in the community. The impact of a mental health issue, predominantly severe anxiety, is the prime reason for referral to Calman Trust services, affecting more than one-third of participants. Every aspect of their support aims to reduce anxiety and grow confidence and self-belief. Each young person is different, so they work at their pace, enabling them to decide what they want to do next, and to develop the tools to sustain this.</p> <p><i>The World of Work and Training</i> Calman provides opportunities for supported work experience in the hospitality sector in Artysan’s Café where the training team supports young people to make progression through tailored work experience placements, at whatever stage they are at in the world of work.</p> <p>Calman Trust offers young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time to settle in and feel understood. • Opportunities to learn how to cook and other essential life skills. • Physical fitness and wellbeing sessions • Help to use public transport, independently. • An understanding of what employers are looking for. • Preparation for the next step, whether to college, employment, or volunteering.  	
<p>3. Support more communities to develop assets and co-design services</p>	<p>Muir of Ord Men’s Shed Muir of Ord Men’s Shed under Muir of Ord Development Trust received capital funding from the Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund in 2022 to purchase 2 x 32ft units from Ord Industrial Supplies. The owner of the business is local to Muir of Ord and passionate about supporting Men’s mental health, so he provided a 50% discount off the purchase price and retrofitted the buildings with disabled access toilet and kitchen. The Men’s Shed members worked with the Highland Council’s Community Asset Transfer service to secure a 20-year lease on land by the industrial estate on Great North Road for the community to take on ownership of the area to develop as a craft village in the future with more sheds and a polytunnel to grow fruit and veg.</p> <p>Community Engagement Case study: 3 Glens Community Care 3 Glens Community Care works in partnership with the NHS care at home team and the social work team, who identify those in need of extra help at home in remote and rural communities. The staff provide varying levels of care from getting someone up and dressed or reminding them to take their medications, to prepping meals and providing some much-needed company.</p>	

“One girl in the high school has been coming regularly to the BBB. At the start, her behaviour was rather erratic and hyper, but over the past few months since the BBB has been running, she has become a lot calmer. She regularly helps with tidying up and recently her sister joined her, although they do not normally get on, but were able to share the BBB space well.”



3 Glens Community Care provides an Electric vehicle for Sunflower Care Home staff as the team cover a very wide geographical area, so access to reliable vehicles is crucial and a lack of transport can be a hinderance to recruitment. They work in partnership with Highland Hospice, Fort Augustus & Glen Moriston Community Company, and Glengarry Trust to address this challenge. Following a successful application to SSE Renewables Sustainable Development Fund, funding was secured for three electric cars and two e-bikes, which are leased to Highland Hospice for the Sunflower Home Care team to use. Having established this pool of e-vehicles, 3 Glens Community Care is now working with Highland Hospice to identify scope for one of the vehicles to be used to support their befriending service and a community transport scheme. This would further enhance the ability of 3 Glens to support community need in relation to social care and wider day to day living in a remote area, which is very poorly served by public transport.

The Big Blue Box

Big Blue Box (BBB) in Kinlochbervie opened in July 2022 with the aim of making young people feel welcome, create a sense of ownership, and be involved in the planning of what the BBB could provide. It has now become an anchor and a safe space for many of the young people and there is still so much more to achieve. Youth Worker, Jo, has been establishing relationships with the young people, running taster sessions for P6 from Durness, Scourie, and Kinlochbervie so that early intervention is in place and the young people know that the BBB is their resource.



The pupils have very little to do in the area and transport links are poor, which means that it is difficult to get anywhere, so Jo is organising events with the Screen machine, Reay Forest estate, Clydesdales on the Croft, and Handa Island. Under the ‘Get Heard’ workstream, three pupils visited the Highland Youth Parliament which has inspired one girl to do this in the future. The others are starting on volunteering activities and their achievement awards. Jo has been building the trust of one girl who seems quite troubled and did not talk initially, but she is starting to open up now. She is having mental and physical challenges, and difficulties at home, so Jo is trying to find out what support she may need and get the right people involved.

Statistics have grown in the past few months with increases from May to September 2023:

KPI	May	September
No. of engagements	35	109
No. of learning hours	56	320
No. of activities per month	13	18

Community Development in Sinclair’s Bay, Wick, Tannach & District, and Berridale & Dunbeath

The [report from Community Development Officer](#) details the activities carried out as a result of funding from SSE to work with organisations in the community council areas of Sinclair’s Bay, Wick, Tannach & District, and Berridale & Dunbeath. Total funds secured towards community projects as of 4th August 2023 amounts to £569,636.03. Some of the projects include:

- Staxigoe Hall and Community Resilience & Disaster Management Plan (completed)
- Sinclair's Bay Trust Cost of Living Community Resilience Project (completed)
- Wick Development Trust Wick Campsite upgrades and Interim Toilet Facelift 2022/2023

The Halkirk District Benefit Fund (HDBF) Board of Directors funds the Rural Development Officer (DO) to build community capacity for a range of community groups including the Halkirk & District Halkirk Youth Club where discussions around building improvements, energy efficiency planning and collaboration with Highland Council have been taking place to provide an access point for free period products in Halkirk. They are forming a committee at the next AGM in November 2023 and the DO is supporting them to complete PVG Checks, helping the girls to have the correct policies in place so they can open safely.



RWE Bad á Cheò Wind Farm Community Fund (Halkirk District) provided funding to the Caithness Voluntary Group (CVG) to recruit a Rural Development Officer to work with the Halkirk and District community and stakeholders to drive community projects.

Sinclair's Bay Trust Cost of Living Community Resilience Project – Completed

This project was designed to help support the residents of Sinclair's Bay over the winter period during the cost-of-living crisis. The project was developed to offer a warm space offering hot drinks throughout the session, accompanied with a light lunch of soup and sandwiches and was available for all residents of Sinclair's Bay.

The project ran one session per week at Keiss Hall, Reiss Hall and Staxigoe Hall for a total of 11 weeks. £9,738 of funding was sourced from the Highland Council Cost of Living Support – Community Led Initiatives Fund which enabled them to employ two part-time workers through CVG on behalf of Sinclair's Bay Trust with the development officer acting as line manager. The project was deemed a huge success and was well received by the local community, and this project is being looked at by other organisations to be replicated in their own areas.

Communities and Place

The [Highland Council UK Shared Prosperity Funding](#) approved on 17th August 2023 in 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support Place Based Investments, regeneration, and town centre improvements; Local Challenge funds & Feasibility; Impactful volunteering and/or social projects; Community measures to reduce the cost of living and relevant feasibility studies.

'Have your say Highland'

In 2022 The Highland Council launched [Have your say Highland](#) - a Highland wide community engagement exercise to ask people's views on how they would like to see area-based funding being prioritised and which types of community projects they would like developed in their local area. The overall consultation informed how funds such as the Coastal Communities Fund, Place Based Investment Programme, Nature Restoration Fund, Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund are

delivered. It has enabled organisations to apply for funding to deliver projects that respond to local needs through community-led action that will bring about positive change in appropriate area-based solutions developed and supported over the next year.

The consultation is informed by the following Highland Strategic Plans and by local place plans for each area:

- [Community Learning & Development Plan 2021-2024](#)
- [Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026](#)
- [Highland Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-2027](#)
- [Highland Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan](#)
- [Highland Community Food Growing Strategy](#)



The Engage Highland website has a page for each of the 9 areas. An example is [Have Your Say Easter Ross](#) which contains the [survey results](#); an area profile showing key facts and figures for that area including population changes, employment, access to services, tourism contribution and environmental categories; and an opportunity to leave ideas to develop specific projects.

Area Place Plans

The Highland Community Planning Board agreed a Place Based Framework which requires all those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places. It aligns with Christie Commission recommendations, community empowerment legislation, new planning legislation and the Council’s commitments to support greater local decision making and community involvement.

The Community Participation and Dialogue Delivery Group priorities described within the HOIP are closely aligned with CLD in Highland. Community dialogue is embedded as a method for community engagement and participation in the Area Place Plans work. The Highland Council team who are coordinating efforts in the 9 areas to produce the Area Place Plans (APPs) in Highland are currently underway at various stages of development as detailed in the infographic.

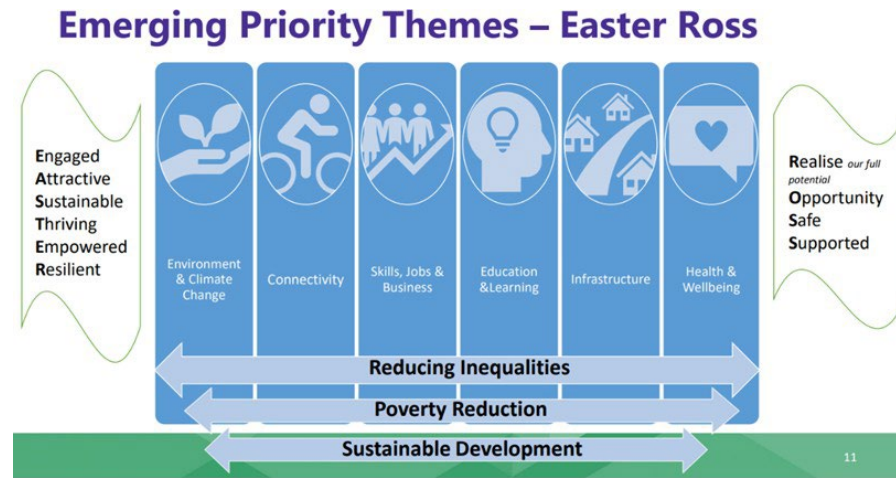
Badenoch & Strathspey In partnership with CNPA & CP Inverness Overview of development & investment. City centre vision Inverness and Area with input from CP Nairn & Nairnshire NICE Steering Group Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) Hybrid Area Place Plan & Local Place Plan	Caithness In partnership with the CP Lochaber FW2040 in place with Board overseeing delivery Lochaber wide in partnership With CP and FW2040 Board Skye, Lochalsh & Wester Ross SARF in place with Board overseeing delivery Wester Ross Biosphere leading on APP for Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh Lochalsh Collaboration developing LPP	Easter Ross THC leading APP on behalf of Community Partnership Mid Ross Black Isle Place Plan – community led, funded by THC, draft plan in place Dingwall & Seaforth – THC leading APP Sutherland NW2045 in place – collaboration of third, public and private sector partners Sutherland wide in partnership with CP
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Easter Ross Area Place Plan

The community in Easter Ross is participating in the dialogue and planning of the [Easter Ross Area Place Plan](#) (ERAPP) which began activity in January 2023. It makes use of the Architecture and Design Scotland’s Place, Parts and Process methodology:

Key milestones delivered in the past nine months include:

- Establishing a steering group involving partners from community and public sectors.
- Stakeholder mapping.
- Preparation of an area brief following desktop research and review of a range of data sets, reports, plans and recent engagement activity.
- Creation of a participation statement setting out how communities & partners can get involved in shaping the APP
- Community engagement and targeted focus group activity
- Delivering a cross sector workshop involving 60 services providers from across the area



An analysis of a range of data and early engagement with stakeholders, has identified the following themes and areas for action. A process of co-creation with stakeholders to turn these broad themes into specific and measurable outcomes and actions which will be articulated in the final plan.

Lochaber Community Partnership

Kinlochleven Community Action Group Local Place Plan

[Voluntary Action Lochaber](#) is a partner of the Lochaber Community Partnership which promises to “actively listen to the community, to identify the local challenges as expressed by them and commit to taking action that will reduce disadvantage and inequality. We will use our combined resources creatively to produce solutions that are meaningful and valued by the community we serve.” The aims of the partnership are to: Promote equality, meet diverse needs of people and communities; build resilient places and communities and support health and wellbeing. It has been tasked with developing Locality Plans for 3 areas including: Kinlochleven (see below), Caol and Fort William Community Action Plan (Feb 2023).

Case study - Kinlochleven Community Plan

The Kinlochleven Community Action Group (CAG) was established in February 2023 by the Lochaber Community Partnership to bring together local community groups, the public sector and other agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage in Lochaber. The aims are to create a space to consider the needs of the local community and work together to produce a community-led plan of action - a Local Place Plan.

The [Fort William Locality Plan](#) (also known as a Community Action Plan) 2019 – 2029 has already been adopted in Feb 2023 with the priority areas of focus identified and based on the HOIP Delivery Groups and CLD 21/24 priorities.

All of the information relating to the Kinlochleven CAG is currently held on a well-informed website called [Kinlochleven Futures](#) which was built for the Local Place Plan work. A useful community directory of local organisations, *Kinlochleven Connects*, has been developed. The Kinlochleven Community Action Group applied to the Highland Council's Communities Regeneration Fund for funding in summer 2023 to prepare a Local Place Plan (Kinlochleven Community Plan) and the funding bid has been successful. The Local Place Plan will give the local community more influence over what happens and an opportunity to express their ambitions for the future of their village of Kinlochleven and enable them to identify their local priorities and develop a plan to tackle them.



Other place plans include The **Black Isle Place Plan**, [Opportunity Black Isle](#), funded by the Highland Council and is currently in draft form being circulated in community buildings and libraries across the Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth.

In **Skye, Lochalsh & Wester Ross**, the Wester Ross Biosphere - a community-led organisation that believes in the power of [participation and inclusion](#) - is leading on the APP for Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh, while Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust is leading on the Lochalsh Community Action Plan which is the Local Place Plan (LPP) driven by the [Lochalsh Collaboration](#) and supported by SCDC through the Investing in Communities Fund.

Highland Food Growing Strategy

The Highland Food Growing Strategy (2022–2027) [Growing Our Future](#) builds knowledge and understanding of Community Food Growing in Highland, empowering communities to start growing, or expand their growing, to become more resilient through community food growing. It has been adopted by the Highland Good Food Partnership (HGFP) which communicates with networks of community food growing groups and identifies allotment spaces to include on the food activity map. [The community food growing progress report](#) for 2022/23 demonstrates the health and wellbeing, economic, environmental, social and educational benefits of the growing projects across all age groups, with opportunities for sharing skills between volunteers and inter-generationally. The projects also act as sites for learning about nutrition, horticulture, the environment, and the wider food system.

Food growing in schools

- 87 schools (44% of schools in Highland) took part in the survey regarding food growing activities.
- 62% of respondent schools engage with the community to utilise their skills in their projects.
- 83% of respondent schools are growing their own food.

Food growing in communities

Examples in the report of collaborative community food growing projects in Highland include [Dingwall Community Development Company](#), Raigmore Community Gardens, Croy Community Garden, Auchtertyre Community and Aviemore Allotments.



Improvement priority 6: Workforce Development (please see the [full report](#))

Considerations for workforce:

- actively promoting diversity;
- responding to the strengths and challenges of an aging workforce;
- attracting and supporting the next generation of volunteers;
- attracting and retaining qualified, experienced and knowledgeable CLD practitioners;
- creating pathways for professional development including the provision of CLD courses provided by academic institutions;
- ensuring that organisations offer placements and apprenticeships for people to develop the craft of CLD; and,
- encouraging and empowering CLD practitioners and community planning partners to be effective leaders, mentors and champions.

Actions	Measures / evaluation	BRAG
<p>1. Establish cross sector working group</p>	<p>There is an increase in the members attending the CLD operational Group with greater representation from third sector and other community partners present at the face-to-face meetings in Strathpeffer with a hybrid online experience which take place every 8 weeks. Partners are encouraged to share information about their core activities, programmes, and projects, telling learners’ stories and submitting case studies for the annual report. These will also contribute to the new CLD Plan which will start in earnest in the spring of 2024.</p> <p>The Community Partnership Coordinating Group was established in 2023 by the Community Partnership team and includes service Leads sharing information and best practice that contribute to CLD practice. The CLDSO is a member of this group.</p> <p>HLH has a Cross service refugee thematic working group and through this group they are developing joint training initiatives. HLH services meet collectively to improve access and remove barriers for refugees by working with the Afghan community and the Countryside Rangers service, or to help them get access to get discounted memberships to join the library or provide help with form filling.</p> <p>Future partnership working for 2023/24 The <i>Highland Integration Network</i> is a network of organisations to support refugees in Highland which include the Scottish refugee Council, Highlands for Ukraine, HLH, SEA, HTSI and Tom McCormack from THC Refugee Settlement with a major event in the planning for early 2024. The Scottish Refugee strategy is coming to an end and the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy Consultation event with refugee learners and the partnership in Inverness. People from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine will be invited to feed back on their experiences in Highland for the Scottish Refugee Council.</p> <p>Mental Health Refugees Arts session drop-in received funding from MH&WBF to provide arts activities for refugees. There is an openness of working together and HLH plans to do a Community Cohesion Project. There are some teething issues with refugees settling into communities, so there is work ongoing to improve cultural cohesion, particularly where there are tensions and conflict.</p>	

<p>2. Carry out needs assessment of the workforce</p>	<p>A Training Needs Assessment is being developed by a consultant for the Learn North members in 2024 to inform the new CLD plans 24/27 bring prepared for CLD education authorities in the North of Scotland and Islands. The decision is being jointly made by Learn North members in early 2024 based on the funding received from the CLD Standards Council for 23/24.</p> <p>NHS Highland shared the Poverty Alliance and Mental Health Foundation’s Poverty and Mental Health (PAMH) Training Needs Survey, which was completed by staff in HLH, THC, NHS and 3rd sector in Jan-24. The aim was to understand the mental health training and support needs of grassroots organisations that work with people on low incomes and to develop a programme of training and support around preventative approaches to mental health. It was funded by the Scottish Government as part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan and is being carried out by the research team from the Mental Health Foundation.</p> <p>The CLD Operational Group is exploring training on Measuring Social Value. David Bryan from SEA kindly provided the SEA Measuring Social Value learning manual and PPT slides to propose a training day for the group in 2024. The CLD Strategic Group is supportive of an approach to measure social value for the Highland CLD partnership.</p>	
<p>3. Deliver self-evaluation and outcome training for CLD workforce and partners</p>	<p>Increased familiarity and confidence of using the How Good is Our CLD (HGIOCLD) framework has been improved.</p> <p>Education Scotland CLD Officer, Laura Starkey, provided additional training. Alona Murray, HMIE delivered 2 sessions with Learn North CLD practitioners on HGIO CLD 4th edition QIs and challenge questions.</p> <p>Self-Evaluation Continuous Improvement (SECI) training was delivered in Spring 2023 and again in October 2023 by Laura Starkey.</p>	
<p>4. Ensure all CLD partners have CLD Competences and Ethics in their entry level training</p>	<p>Entry level induction training has a focus on CLD Competences & Ethics</p> <p>Education Scotland CLD Officer, Laura Starkey, delivered session on CLD Ethics and Values and competences. She also supported the CLD Support Officer by providing CLD Standards Council slides for HCPP event in 2023.</p> <p>Youth Highland uses CLD competencies to support community empowerment and Youth Work outcomes to ensure that Young People are working in equal partnership with adults in to enable the best outcomes for themselves and their peers where they live. The Young Grant Givers Project goals focused on: Youth Led Action; Grassroots Community Projects; Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (drugs/alcohol/criminal behaviour); Partnership; and Tackling Gender Inequalities. Projects that showed an understanding of CLD and Youth Work were also encouraged.</p> <p>Youth Highland is running 2 training courses on Introduction to CLD in Feb-24</p> <p>HLH is delivering the Introduction to Community Based Adult Learning (CBAL) training for volunteers in Feb and Mar-24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: The Context of Adult Learning in Scotland • Part 2: Effective Adult Learning methodology • Part 3: Community-based Adult Learning Practice 	

	<p>CLD Standards Council - Professional Induction Programme is attracting experienced practitioners from the third sector who do not have a CLD qualification. The HLH CLD Support Officer is undertaking the 3-month course. A range of materials and online resources are provided on i-develop and an academic mentor offers support to participants who work their way through units</p>	
<p>2. Promote the CLD Standards Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an increase in Highland membership to the CLD Standards Council due to invitations by HTSI and HLH to invite the CLD Standards Council to deliver presentations on the core values, ethics, competencies, and benefits of CLDSC membership at events in 2023. The HTSI Community Development Seminar at Merkinch Community Centre was well attended where people heard an excellent presentation from Vikki Carpenter, CLDSC. • The CLD Support Officer regularly attends the CLDSC member meet ups for ED&I, Gender Imbalance and Equality, Education and Skills Review, the forthcoming CLD Review, CLDSC AGM, Equality & Diversity monitoring form. • The CLD Standards Council has helped the CLDSO with information on building partnerships and data sharing. Vikki Carpenter attends the Learn North meetings with Highland 3rd sector reps and the CLDSO. • CLDSO promotes CLDSC as a professional body at the HCPP Coordinating group in a CLD presentation. <p>CLD Standards Mark in Highland Youth Highland is the only organisation in the Highland region to hold the CLD Standards Mark which they've held since 2015 and were pleased to achieve again in 2023. Members of the CLD Strategic and Operational Group have expressed an interest for the Highland CLD partnership to aim for the professional standard as a whole group to recognise the value of the CLD work they are doing collectively. HLH SQA Learning Centre along with HLH AL Manager and YW Manager and the CLDSO are having discussions about how the CLD Standards Mark can be developed with the CLD Operational Group</p>	
<p>3. Provide mental health and wellbeing related training for the CLD workforce</p>	<p>NHS Highland has the Highland Mental Wellbeing website with advice and resources to support mental wellbeing. The calendar of events is regularly updated with dates of training, national and local activities. Currently, the NHS Health Improvement Team and THC are providing Scottish Mental Health First Aid training for staff over 2 days. NHS Highland staff have their own wellbeing at work website to support staff with their health & Wellbeing NHS Highland Staff Health and Wellbeing (scot.nhs.uk)</p> <p>Highland Cares provided mental health training for staff in 2022/23</p> <p>Learn North members organised a programme of CLD workforce training for the Winter Learning Festival. Mental Health and Wellbeing training on CHIME (Connectedness, Hope & Optimism, Identity, Meaning and Empowerment) was delivered by Moray Wellbeing Hub in Aug-23 and can be used alongside our CLD values. CLD practitioners have an opportunity to refocus their evaluations to include CHIME to link in with KPI returns. Learn North also organised Health Issues in the Community (HIIC) Tutor training which was delivered to 12 members of Learn North including the 2 Highland Third Sector reps. HIIC uses the social model of health to identify social, physical, and emotional health issues caused by poverty and inequality.</p> <p>Suicide Intervention and Prevention Programme (SIPP) training is being refreshed for HLH staff via NHS Highland TURAS. The online training has been developed and rolled out on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership, led by NHS Highland, and aims to improve people's awareness of suicidal thinking and to increase confidence to ask someone if they're feeling suicidal, and to support</p>	

them to seek further help. The course is suitable for anyone who wants to be able to help someone who might be at risk of suicide, including all High Life Highland colleagues.

HLH provides **Child Protection recognition and Response Level 2** training for staff.

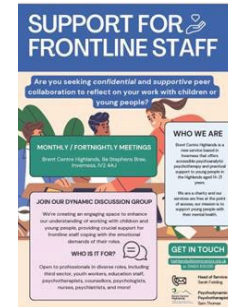
Trauma-informed practice training is offered to **HLH** staff by NHS Highland on [Commercial Sexual Exploitation \(CSE\)](#) to ensure that the needs of women are met with regards to housing, safety, mental health, trauma-informed support, motherhood, substance abuse, sexual violence, money and poverty, criminal justice and exiting the sex industry – this is about the importance of giving women space to consider and pursue their ambitions and dreams, and build a sense of themselves. Offering support to women who face barriers to exiting the sex industry, enables them to access education and look beyond academic achievement to include the development of life skills.

Awareness Raising, Education & Prevention

[Caithness and Sutherland Women's Aid](#) (CASWA) specialises in awareness raising, education and prevention work against gender-based violence and abuse in women, children, and young people. In November 2022 the Caithness and Sutherland group raised awareness during 16 days of activism in the community aimed at preventing and eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls.

Brent Centre Highlands – Support for Frontline Staff

The new Brent Centre Highlands based in Inverness provides confidential and supportive peer collaboration to reflect on the work of practitioners with children and young people. They create an emerging space to enhance their understanding of working with children and young people, providing crucial support for frontline staff coping with the emotional demands of their role. The discussion support group is available to professionals in diverse roles including third sector, youth workers, education staff, psychotherapists, counsellors, psychologists, nurses, psychiatrists and more.



4. Embed YouthLink Skills Framework into Youth Work practice

The seven youth work outcomes in the [National YouthLink Outcomes and Skills Framework](#) describe the key overarching impacts of youth work in young people's lives.

High Life Highland

HLH Youth Work Service was one of the organisations that took part in a pilot from late 2017 to 2018 to test the indicators that are now used for the National YouthLink Outcomes and Skills Framework. The Youth Work Manager is currently in discussion with YouthLink about using and linking the framework through NOS for Youth Work and CLD competencies aligning with HLH operational guidance, the planning and evaluation cycle and practice.

Youth Highland

Youth Highland is using the National YouthLink Outcomes and Skills Framework to help develop and measure the impact of their youth work. They have used the Youth Work Outcomes over the past 8 years to help them work with their partners to identify which

“I loved the journey that I shared with the friends I made from day one. That network of support continued all the way through my degree and was backed up by the lecturers and my personal tutor who have continued to be so supportive on my journey to becoming a nursery manager.”
Katie Henderson

organisations carry out actions against each outcome. This has helped them to understand where there are strengths and gaps in provision. It has also enabled them to identify where there needs to be negotiation to resource essential youth work workstreams.

Youth Highland often use the outcomes statements to help in consultations with young people and when working in partnership with young people to develop and plan youth projects and initiatives. This ensures that everything they do aligns with the national framework. They have recently developed an evaluation tool based on the skills framework which will help us to work in partnership with young people to plan, deliver and review the impact of youth work on their own skills development.

UHI PDA Youth Work

The PDA Youth Work at Shetland College UHI is available to register at <https://www.shetland.uhi.ac.uk/courses/pda-youth-work-pda/> for those who may be interested in studying PDA Youth Work. It is a fully online course designed for flexible study times. The course runs from August to March (term time). UHI are also offering an online information session in January 2024 for anyone who is interested. **UHI** has made the difficult decision not to run the **HNC Working in Communities** in 2024 due to lack of uptake and capacity with tutors. Originally there had been a demand identified, however, circumstances relating to personal, work, and financial barriers have meant that many potential CLD students are not able to take up the opportunity at this time.




UHI BA (Hons) Child and Youth Studies

UHI delivers their CLD degree [BA \(Hons\) Child and Youth Studies](#) at UHI Perth College. UHI students on the undergraduate degree are hoping to get CLD placement opportunities with employers during term to develop their practice with information being shared across networks to support the CLD student placements. Katie Henderson studied the BA Child and Youth Studies at UHI Perth and said of her experience in the quote:

HLH National Progression Awards (NPA) Theory & Approaches to Youth Work

High Life Highland’s workforce development programme and contribution to Continuous Professional Development will include the NPA Theory & Approaches to Youth Work, SCQF Level 6 staff award to be rolled out from March 2024. The Pilot course is aimed at staff and volunteers with no formal Youth Work qualifications with Youth Work National Outcome Standards (NOS) and CLD competencies embedded in the learning. The NPA introduces learners to theory and practice techniques which focus on engaging with young people and working with communities. Assessment will be through a mix of practical and knowledge-based assessments. The course will be delivered using a hybrid of online and in person sessions over 10 weeks with candidates attending all sessions as well as self-directed learning to complete a portfolio of work. The HLH audit and QS standing with SQA is held at high levels and maintained over the years. A similar approach is proposed for the PDA in Adult Learning and TESOL for later in 2024. HLH also delivers SQA Assessor training for staff who are delivering courses.

	<p>Youth Highland</p> <p>Youth Highland champions CLD by underpinning the professional practice in all their work. They have received funding from the Community Regeneration Fund to run 2 x a full day's training in February 2024 on <i>CLD – An Introduction</i> in Dingwall which underpins the CLD values, ethics and competencies, the importance of CLD and the difference it can make in people's lives as well as reflection and evaluation for CLD practitioners.</p>	
<p>5. Contribute to the development of CLD community of practice across the north – Learn North and Northern Alliance</p>	<p>HTSI and HLH are represented across Learn North and Northern Alliance. The Depute CEO of HTSI and the CLD Support Officer at HLH both attend the Learn North meetings, ensuring that the information flows through the governance and feedback is provided on what Highland is doing. HLH Youth Work Manager attends YouthLink and the Adult Learning Manager attends Adult Learning Managers. The Head of Adult & Youth Services attends the Northern Alliance RIC. This will be mapped out in 2024.</p> <p>A Highland partnership of 6 reps from THC, HLH, HTSI and Youth Highland are contributing to the CLD Review in 2024.</p> <p>The Highland Youth Work Development Group (HYWDG) is currently in abeyance. It will be revisited at the time of the HOIP Review and development of the new CLD Plan 2024/27. The official position will be provided by the CLD Strategic Group.</p>	
<p>6. Organise CLD in STEM professional learning sessions for Highland workforce</p>	<p>Highland CLD practitioners have experienced increased confidence in STEM subjects due to a session arranged through Aberdeen Science Centre in Spring 23.</p> <p>Highland Science Skills Academy</p> <p>An innovative project introducing the world of science and technology to Primary and Secondary pupils from 199 schools across Highland is celebrating a significant milestone, exceeding 20,000 engagements with pupils, teachers and parents. Over the past four years the Science Skills Academy (SSA) has been at the forefront of empowering young minds and bridging the gap between education and industry needs. Currently operating in Highland, SSA has worked with 98% of local schools across the region. It provides a new way of learning, getting 10–14-year-olds out of the classroom and into specially designed Newton Rooms to explore STEM (science, technology, engineering, and maths) subjects.</p> <p>The SSA and the Highland Newton Rooms Network partnered with HLH Adult Learning to create family-friendly STEM activities across 5 Newton rooms in Thurso, Dingwall, Inverness, and Fort William, with one touring Pop-Up room. The Newton Rooms create experiential hands-on learning with state-of-the-art equipment supported by a dedicated STEM Engagement Officer who is an expert in modern theories of learning and volunteers from a Health Sciences background.</p> <p>One STEM event held at Dingwall Newton Room saw 70 attendees made up of over 20 families who also participated in the HLH Highland Festival of Maths project funded by Multiply. Opportunities were created for families to learn new skills together, trying out different challenges, crafts and games in a fun, low-cost way they can try out at home, thus creating positive maths memories as a legacy for future generations. workshops included: how to make a catapult, origami frogs, hanging decorations, finger painting by numbers, Bookbug sessions and early years numeracy activities. This is helping to build the confidence, skills, and motivation of staff to deliver STEM learning.</p>	

Digital Youth Work

[Digital Youth Work](#) has great resources to help Youth Work practitioners in Highland develop their practice by creating a STEM makerspace with young people. An example includes [Tinderbox Lab Youth Projects](#) where they work with young people on games design and creative coding where they run weekly courses and clubs for young people and introductions to basic electronics with a lab studio space for one-off workshops for young people to build circuits to light up a lamp.



Lairg & District Learning Centre

Lairg & District Learning Centre aims to provide or assist in providing local facilities and resources designed to support lifelong learning and skills development. They run a range of exciting and educational courses, events, and workshops on a huge variety of subjects throughout Sutherland. The women's employability course covers a wide range of employability skills such as team building, raising self-confidence, CV writing, managing a family and career, IT skills and more. Weekly IT Drop-ins are available and Gaelic conversation classes take place in Golspie. The weekly Maker Space provides a social space to unleash learner's creativity. The community woodwork group focuses on Recycling and Upcycling where products can be created from anything donations to the centre. Most items are due to be incinerated or sent to landfill, but the Maker Space can see great new uses for them.

Lairg & District Learning Centre is one of eight community groups that have come together as part of the Highland Community Waste Partnership, a climate movement coordinated by environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful, aimed at helping to reduce consumption and waste and tackle Scotland's throwaway culture. The partners raise awareness of how unsustainable consumption contributes to climate change to address through a programme of collaborative grassroots activity. They focus on key issues such as reducing food waste; tackling single use items; and increasing the use of pre-loved, repaired, and shared goods. The partnership is building a movement for more sustainable consumption, supporting communities to reduce their carbon footprints, and contributing towards Scotland's ambitions to create a more circular economy and become a Net Zero nation by 2025.

The Kyle of Sutherland Apprenticeship Scheme

The Kyle of Sutherland Apprenticeship Scheme was created by the local community in 2010 from funds generated by SSE's Achany wind farm. It has helped 18 young people in the Kyle of Sutherland area find sustainable employment on their doorstep. The scheme can provide monetary support towards the cost of recruiting and training an apprentice. Examples of apprenticeships which have been supported are joinery, plumbing, butchery, mechanical, equine, heavy plant, business, electrical and personal training.

YouthLink Scotland Learning Zone

[YouthLink](#) Learning zone has a wealth of e-learning resources to support Youth Work practitioners in Highland to develop their [Digital Youth Work practice](#). As youth work adapts to incorporate digital into many different areas of practice, youth workers are encouraged to focus on the digitalisation and digital transformation of the youth work sector and youth work practice. This involves proactively using and/or addressing digital media and technology in youth work practice as a tool, an activity and/or as content. It has the same aims and is underpinned by the same ethics, values, and principles as youth work in general and can happen



The Young STEM Leader programme will 'stimulate and strengthen the development of peer mentoring and inspiration in STEM for young people by young people.'
Scottish Government Strategy for STEM Education and Training (2017)

- *Role Playing Game (RPG)* - Youth Highland worked with LGBTQ+ young people to address an issue with accessing a gender-neutral loo which metamorphized into an award-winning RPG *Where's Your Head At?* featuring their experiences, the UNCRC, signposting and activism to make positive change.
- *SWAY newsletters* – HERE for Caithness, Sutherland Community Partnership and Youth Highland are examples of organisations that produce weekly SWAY newsletters which provide a suite of useful information for people across their networks. Many other public and third sector organisations produce monthly/quarterly newsletters and annual reports using a combination of data, stories, charts, and graphics to promote their CLD work.
- *Substack* – HLH Substack [Learning for Life](#) articles published from 2024 promote 'learning activities for Highland communities which include help with everyday life skills such as reading, writing, using numbers, English as a second language and digital literacy.'

STEM Nation and Education Scotland

The STEM Nation and Education Scotland [STEM Blog](#) contains a wealth of information about STEM funding, events and training. List of [STEM Grants and Funding opportunities](#) such as: [Digital Xtra Fund](#) grants up to £5,000 for schools and community organisations looking to start up or scale up extracurricular tech activities for young people in the 2024/25 academic year. A list of [STEM Festivals](#) which includes the Caithness International Science Festival and Inverness Science Festival in 2024. [STEM Planner with a Programme of Events](#) across Scotland and a Technologies planning resource.

Professional Learning in STEM

Scottish Schools Education Research Centre (SSERC) offers a portfolio of [professional learning \(PL\) programmes for STEM educators](#) in Scotland including: childminders, early years workers, primary and secondary staff as well as lecturers, technicians and those who work with young people in non-formal settings such as youth workers and in the CLD sector.

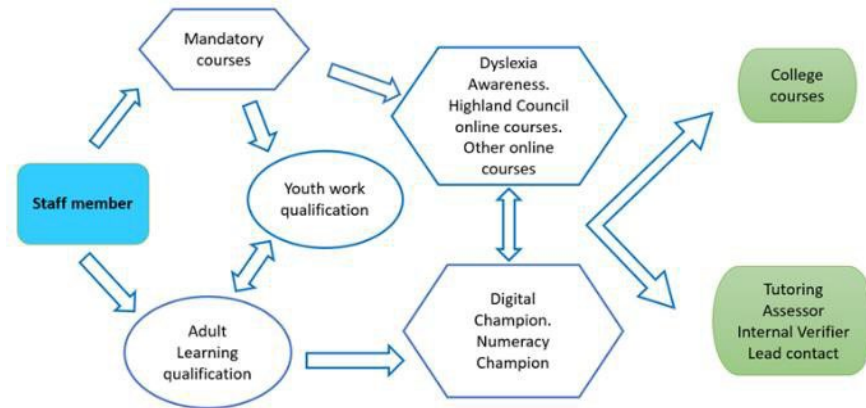
Young STEM Leader Programme

SSERC offers a wide range of STEM engagement and enrichment programmes to increase access to, and participation in STEM, beyond the classroom setting. The [Young STEM Leader Programme](#) gives young people the chance to inspire, lead and mentor their peers through the creation and delivery of STEM activities, events and interactions within their schools, communities, or youth groups. The programme aims to inspire more young people to develop an interest in STEM and pursue the study of STEM subjects and relevant future pathways. The STEM skills gap means there is not enough young people coming through with appropriate skills, attributes, and qualifications.

The Project Team at SSERC recommends that an accredited centre has two or more trained Tutor Assessors (TAs): one to deliver the programme and another to act as the Internal Verifier (IV). In Highland there are two Associate Regional Trainer and Verifiers [ARTAVs](#), Eileen MacLeod (Alness Academy) and David Vincent (Charleston Academy). The Young STEM Leader [handbook](#) provides information on how to develop the programme.

HLH Learning Pathway Flowchart for staff member:

- HLH is delivering the NPA Theory & Practice in Youth Work with the NOS and CLD competencies embedded.
- The PDA Theory & Practice in Adult Learning and TESOL will be delivered later in 2024.
- CLDSC kite mark approval process underway for all 3 staff awards with recommendation for CLDSC Associate Membership for CLD Staff.
- HLH Info emails require mandatory assessor training for all staff.
- Promotion of CLD sector training via HLH Assessor Centre, Education Scotland and CLD Standards Council



7. Complete Professional Learning self-evaluation for continuous improvement Highland pilot

- The professional learning pilot has been completed with the learning identified and shared.
- Laura Starkey and Nicola Sykes from Education Scotland delivered the session to HLH.
- Laura and Nicola also delivered HGIOCLD QIs 1.2, 2.3, 6.1, 6.2, Community Needs Analysis, Self-Evaluation Continuous Improvement (SEIC), LEAP delivered to CLD Operational and Strategic Group at the Highland CLD Gathering on 4th October 2023 in Strathpeffer Pavilion pictured to the right. (Previous SEIC was delivered in Spring 23, now on daughter of SEIC)

